

THE OLD HENDONIAN ♦ 2024 ♦

110TH ANNIVERSARY



SPECIAL EDITION

ISSUE NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

Dear Old Hendonians and Friends,

A very warm welcome to another bumper edition of the *Old Hendonian*, published this year to coincide with the school's 110th anniversary. We very much hope you can join us at the end of September to mark this special occasion – please see page 2 for more about this.

Once again, we are fortunate to include a wide range of material which will hopefully be of interest to all. My grateful thanks go to all contributors. No school memories this time around – but there is no shortage of other eminently readable articles, including reports from two separate year groups who have held reunions recently, and not forgetting the slots from all our “regulars,” for which I thank them warmly.

Many of you are happy to stay in touch by receiving this magazine, and perhaps attending the occasional reunion or other event at the school. But now, if you'd like to become more involved – whether it's mentoring, giving career advice, talks or presentations on specific subjects, or perhaps something else of value ... the school would very much like to hear from you! We are also planning to set up an online alumni community, to make it easier for old friends and mentors to reconnect with each other. You can find out more about all of this on the following page of the school's website: <https://www.hendonschool.co.uk/home/alumni-2/>

My usual thanks go to my proofreaders – and, of course, a special “thank you” to everyone who has made a donation to Friends of Hendon School, for which we are always very grateful. Please note that new arrangements apply for future donations – more about this on page 27.

With sincere best wishes to you all,

Alan Freedman – Editor

**You are cordially
invited to our
110th ANNIVERSARY
AFTERNOON at
HENDON SCHOOL**



**Sunday 29 September
1 pm to 3 pm**

**RSVP using either the link or
the QR code below**

**[https://forms.office.com/e/zZ
vxEz4N3n](https://forms.office.com/e/zZvxEz4N3n)**



- **Light refreshments will be available**
- **Guided tours of school**
- **Memorabilia from archives on show**
- **Come and exchange memories with other alumni**

POET'S CORNER

FROM MIRIAM WEBBER ...

WHERE WOULD I BE NOW?

Wartime Memories, 2017

A Sunday morning, I was five,
a happy age to be alive.
I woke my parents, all was fine,
September nineteen thirty nine.

I bounced upon their comfy bed,
but Daddy frowned and shook his head,
they lay there talking of a “war”
I hadn’t heard that word before.

A “war” had started, miles away
but why should this affect our day
of picnics, outings, zoos and rides,
of ice cream, treats and lots besides?



As soon as bombs began to fall
the ministers met in Whitehall,
a huge evacuation plan
to save the children now began

By sending them across the sea
to Canada, to safety, free
from bombs and blitz and Doodlebugs
and Morrison shelters on the rugs.

With heavy heart my mother knew
she’d have to send her treasured two,
she signed us up, to wait our turn
while Europe watched its cities burn.



One ship was sunk, but none were
drowned,
the scheme continued, westward bound
The City of Benares sailed
quite unaware that it was tailed,

Torpedoed, sunk, at dreadful cost
near eighty children’s lives were lost. *
My mother cancelled her intent
as did the British government.



We moved to Chesham: fields, wild
flowers
where I spent many happy hours,
away from London’s battle scare –
the best of childhood’s years were there.

“Dig for victory,” “Walls have ears,”
so innocent of wartime fears
these posters were a mystery
that formed part of my history,



But if instead we both had sailed
how would the fates have then
prevailed?

Would I have lived, or would I be
a pile of bones beneath the sea?

Miriam Webber, née Retkin
(1945 – 1950)

**Reports of the disaster in 1940 can be found on the internet.*

When the scheme was opened, 200,000 applications came in, for 20,000 places.

After the City of Benares tragedy, the scheme was cancelled.

NEWS FROM OLD HENDONIANS

Mary Avis, née Chester (1945 – 1950) was saddened to hear of the passing of **Miles Specter** (see Obituary, page 30). Although he was in the year below her, they were the same age, and she has many happy memories of playing and watching tennis and the old putting green in Hendon Park, where most teenagers gathered in those days.

Commenting on a couple of articles from regular contributors which were in last year's *Old Hendonian*, Mary went on to say:

Ashleigh Brilliant, Eric Solleveld and Miriam Webber were all in my year. Miriam and I were in the same class (the "practical" form). The "beau" in her poem was in the same class as my sister Lavinia.

About Ashleigh and Eric – I remember Eric was the recipient of a wayward javelin while running on the school field which caused a shoulder injury ... so perhaps Ashleigh has been worrying about nothing, and may rest his conscience in peace!

Miss Davis was a very formidable senior mistress and very strict, particularly regarding school uniform. Woe betide any girl she spotted not wearing their school beret! Lastly, my cousin **Henry Little (1935 – 1940)** died in January last year aged 98 in California, where he had lived for many years.

Your Editor was delighted to be able to put Mary and Miriam – as well as Ashleigh and Eric – back in touch with one another.

Professor Alan Izenman (1957 – 1964) has now retired from his full-time post as Professor of Statistical Science at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he had been for over 40 years – an impressive

track record, to say the least. He had the considerable honour of being chosen to receive the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award at the Fox School of Business at the University.



Another distinguished old boy – **Professor Jeffrey Tobias (1958 – 1965)** – has sent in the following. I left school after A-levels in 1965, went to Cambridge to study medicine, and then St Bartholomew's Hospital for the clinical years. After training posts at the Whittington, Barts and UCH, I went to the USA on a year's scholarship to study and do clinical work in the emerging specialty of oncology – cancer medicine – at Harvard, which was quite an eye-opener! Brilliant opportunities for a young researcher ... but seeing the appalling inequalities in the American approach to medical care makes you realise how terrific the NHS is, despite its

many faults and shortcomings.

I then came back after my year there, moved across to the Royal Marsden, trained in both chemo and radiotherapy, and became a Consultant at UCH and the Middlesex, now merged, in 1981. I'm still working there after over 40 years, though winding down of course. Ever the optimist, I'm still excited by the prospect of new treatments for cancer – we've made such dramatic progress during my time there. They gave me a personal professorial Chair around twenty years ago, and my other role is as Chair of the fundraising team at the UCLH Trust.

On the personal side, I married the wonderful Gabriela in 1973 and we had three children, one of whom (Max) set up the Dusty Knuckle bakery and social enterprise ten years ago. Sadly Gaby, a brilliant GP who practised in London's East End, died of cancer in 2008 – but I married again, to Susan (also recently widowed and also an East End GP – obviously my *idée fixe!*) in 2011.

Between us we have a large family – each of us has three children. Altogether there are currently 11 grandchildren. Spare time interests

– I have a great passion for music and still sing in a local choir – thank you, Mr Western – such a special teacher! I And special thanks, too, to the inimitable Gertie Stranz – an absolute inspiration, sheer perfection as the world's greatest chemistry teacher! What a marvellous school Hendon County was. So many of us remember it with great affection.

Your Editor has unearthed an insightful article by Jeffrey, published in the school magazine for July 1964, in which he shared some revealing thoughts on life from the perspective of a sixth-former. Many are as true today, sixty years on, as they were then. Don't be surprised if it finds its way into the "From the Archives" section of a future magazine.



Jeffrey is not the only Old Hendonian who has fond memories of Gertie Stranz.

Sandra Myers née Barc (1958 – 1965) writes: I was born on 9th November 1946, Lord Mayor's Day – part of the post war "baby boomer" generation and actually twin to a classmate, **Dick Coldwell**. This always amused us, as our backgrounds couldn't have been more different – he a Scottish Calvinist and myself from an immigrant Jewish family. But the one part of our lives that we proudly shared, was the privilege of being

educated by the finest teachers at Hendon County Grammar School.

Of my generation, only 2% or thereabouts went on to university, and an even smaller percentage of girls. I left school after the first year of my A-level studies, and took a Company Secretary course. I then worked for a few years until, like most good Jewish girls of my age, I got married. The man of my dreams, **Bernard Myers (1955 – 1962)** – himself a Hendon County alumnus – is still the man of my dreams after more than 56 years.

I regretted enormously not having had the opportunity of a university education ... so, in my mid 30s, once my children were old enough, I attended the City Lit in Covent Garden, followed by a three-year B.A. (Hons) degree at Hatfield Poly (as it was then, now the University of Hertfordshire) followed by an M.A. in Jewish History at University College London.

I then spent many years in Holocaust Education and as a director of the London Jewish Cultural Centre based in North West London. I am currently a member of the Lockdown University Faculty, an online facility started with just 30 bored retirees during Covid, but which now broadcasts internationally and has more than 16,000 members.

I also volunteered for some 25 years at the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and was a member of a benefits appeals tribunal as well as a prison visitor. When not occupied with my children and grandchildren – two of whom are about to graduate – I enjoy travelling, playing golf and bridge, and keeping in touch with old school friends. As a footnote, I gave a presentation on immigrants who made a quiet and unsung impact on our postwar society – one of whom was Gertie Stranz, our chemistry teacher at Hendon County. She came to England as a young refugee from Nazi Germany, and dedicated her whole long life to educating a generation of students at our school. Every one of the students of my year who took A-level chemistry gained an 'A' grade. As a side note, her brother Walter was responsible for much of the road planning in Milton Keynes – in fact, he has a street named after him.

We undoubtedly benefitted from a cohort of gifted and dedicated teachers – one other who must be mentioned was Jack Driver – a blunt, gruff Yorkshireman who was not only our form master for two years, but also instilled in us a love of French. They must not be forgotten.



Sandra has sent in this recent photo of herself with Prof. Jeffrey Tobias (centre) and Dick Coldwell (right). Her daughter Lyndsey Brand gave a presentation to Year 7

students at the school last autumn – you can read more about this on page 18.

Dr Anthony Leeds (1959 – 1966) writes: I studied at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, graduating in 1971, and worked in NHS posts, with a short period as a medical officer in Sierra Leone in 1973, until I gained a three-year training post at the MRC gastroenterology unit. Then after 30 years on the academic staff of Kings College London, I moved to a commercial medical director's post for the last twelve years of my full-time career. I retired from NHS medical practice four years ago but hold visiting research posts in Copenhagen, Glasgow and Kuala Lumpur where I continue to help younger colleagues translate their clinical trial evidence



into real life practice for common major obesity-related conditions: diabetes, osteoarthritis, and cardiovascular disease. I live in Ruislip with my wife and youngest son, and not far from our other children and grandchildren.

David Gottler (1957 – 1964) has shared his favourite school memory with your Editor as follows:

When we were in the A-level geography group, we were taught by a lovely teacher called Miss Jillard. Her initials were BFOJ, and I used to call her "b'foj."

In the geography room, we had a retractable large metallic globe. It was spring-loaded so you could pull it down from the ceiling. We had a very tall boy in the group called Andrew Potter whose job it was, on instruction from Miss Jillard, to lower the globe. On one particular occasion she called Potter up to the front to pull the globe down, which he did. She was talking to the class about something to do with the globe, but none of us were really paying attention. When she had finished, she turned to Potter and told him to let go of the globe. So he opened his hand and released the rope which he was holding.

As a result, the globe left his hand and flew up to the ceiling, gaining speed along the way. When it reached the ceiling, it shattered into a thousand shards, all of which fell onto Miss Jillard's head. At this point the class

was irredeemably convulsed – and that was the end of the lesson for that particular day!

A warm welcome to new subscriber **Janet Byrne née Summerson (1955 – 1961)** who recalls another amusing incident:

I started at Hendon County in 1955. One of my favourite teachers was Mr Richards who taught English. For some reason, during a lesson, he was perched on the back of a chair with his feet on the seat whilst explaining something to the class. One minute he was there ... and then he was not. All that could be seen were his legs waving in the air, behind his desk! There was a stunned silence from the class until he emerged looking a little dishevelled and more than a little sheepish. “My mother always told me not to sit like that!” was all he said. The whole class, as one, burst out laughing, and he joined in. We laughed and laughed for a good few minutes. All except me – I could not stop! I was almost hysterical and had to be sent out. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen, and for years later whenever I recalled the incident, it had the same effect. On reflection, it was lucky that he hadn’t got hurt.

I wonder if anyone else remembers that morning?

Former classmates **John Barnett FRICS (1950 – 1955)** and **Roger Bruck (1950 – 1957)** continue to set shining examples of sporting achievements in later life. Earlier this year, John won the 85s GB National Indoor Tennis Singles and Doubles at Wrexham, while Roger won the GB Masters 85s High Jump for the 23rd time. Both came into the school to give talks to current students during National Careers Week in early March, while **Yen Yee Chong (1972 – 1979)** talked and performed a Traditional Chinese Medicine Shiatsu workshop, treating a couple of teachers as volunteer patients in the process to demonstrate the technique involved. He also talked about other NHS staff working in hospitals and clinics using physiotherapy, chiropractic or osteopathy as career opportunities.

Reg Beckley (1942 – 1948) is someone else who continues to go from strength to strength in his acting prowess – he “trod the boards” (well, grass) as the “old man” in Act 4 Scene 2 of this summer’s production of *Macbeth* in Brownsea Island’s Open Air Theatre. Sadly, this looks to be the last such production, ending a track record of open-air performances going back for 60 years, following a dispute with the National Trust over the impact of the shows on the island’s nature and wildlife.



The theatre company is committed to finding a new home on the mainland, but also supports the National Trust’s idea of establishing an amphitheatre-type replacement on the island, with less elaborate sets and staging.

Congratulations to **Tony Lee (1947 – 1952)** and his wife Sheila are in order on their reaching a special milestone. As Tony puts it, in his own inimitable style:

I hope to be at the school’s 110th anniversary event (more about this on page 2), particularly as it will be the second celebration of September.

My wife Sheila and I (or is it me? - *must check with any English teacher in attendance*) celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary on 5th September – although I



suspect the report from my wife will be little better than that of E.W. Maynard Potts: *Could do better*; or, as Miss Ward, my Art teacher, wrote: *Good ...* but then could not resist adding: *Sometimes*.

My good friend **Phil Churcher (1946 – 1954)** has had kinder things to say about my amateur attempts at art, which makes me wonder if I should have appointed him as my agent ... I might have had a second home in The Seychelles or Kilburn High Road.

Strange then that not so long ago our Art group had an exhibition, none of my paintings were sold BUT a woodburning scene I did was sold to a lady. I had no idea what I should charge. When told that it was for her granddaughter for her ninth birthday, I said she could have it for free. She refused, so I sold it for £10. Phil might have sold it for £1000.

The burning was on birch plywood and watercolour paper which formed the backdrop. On the reverse side of the picture, I wrote a short note and an even shorter poem which may be attached.

Your Editor’s recent mailbox included a most fascinating email from **Evelyn Kennedy née Dresner (1956 – 1963)**, sister of the late **Stephen Dresner** (see Obituary, page 35) in which she wrote:

Beryl Macleod née Rudolph (1956 – 1963) – who now lives in Toronto – and I were friends at school and out of touch for several years, but corresponding very often now for the last ten years or so. We have shared many memories of our years in Hendon County. In fact I kept a full diary from 1960 until early 1972, so my fourth to sixth form days are all described. I wrote a whole large page every day – around 500 words!

My brother Stephen Dresner was at Hendon County too, leaving in 1953 as a student, only to return three years

later as a physics teacher, a post he held for many years. Sadly he died in August 2022. He rarely talked to me about school – at least not to tell me anything I wouldn't know otherwise!

I was always keen to befriend teachers as much as possible ... and with Stephen teaching there perhaps I had more credibility, so my desire to get closer to some of them was perhaps easier. Do you remember we had some really foggy days and would be let out early to get home! Or maybe that didn't happen in your day. [*Foggy days – yes; being let out early – definitely not!* – Ed.] At such times Stephen (who never learned to drive) would get a lift from Jimmy Morris, so of course I got one too! I sent 'Teddy' (Ben Edwards – Latin) a card when he was in hospital in 1958, and he replied. I have the letter. I also corresponded with other teachers after I left, and I visited Miss Davis (Senior Mistress in my earlier years) in Sussex when I was near there. When I lived in Birmingham for three years (1967 to 1970) I used to babysit for Brian Chapple and his wife. Brian had taught Geography at Hendon, but moved to Solihull. I also still have letters from Dr O'Connell (who taught physics), Nick, and 'Lieutenant Commander' Grundy who had been our form teacher ... but I threw away most correspondence during a Covid clearout! I did share some school diary extracts with Beryl when we started our frequent correspondence in recent years, so there may be some memories to share there.

My main contribution to the school was that I ran the library from my fourth year onwards, during which time it moved from a small room in the 'New Wing' up to the large room at one end of the Top Corridor. These parts may have different names by now!

I still live close by in Hendon, since marrying in 1971. My husband died far too young, in 1996.

However since early Covid, I have had a close friendship with Geoffrey Bernstein, who was also at Hendon County but is four years older than I am. We didn't know each other at school. I believe he got hold of last year's *Old Hendonian* recently from Cedric Olivestone, who was in his school year and lives in Israel. Cedric's brother David was in my year. I don't have contact with anyone else from those days. Having said that, the Jewish Community being what it is, I do occasionally come across other old Hendonians. So many of us in those days were Jewish.

At the last election I was voting at Hendon School, but in a building at the back, so I went through the passage from Green Lane. There is so much more building now, but the front always looks much the same! I had suggested to Beryl that if she comes over we should get ourselves a tour round!

We so often reminisce. Geoffrey has many memories too, but not always such good ones, though he does have a prodigious memory!

Strangely enough, my hairdresser also attended the school, but many years later. I don't think she fitted in! I became a teacher myself, but Primary. I taught at Hasmore Primary for several years before becoming Co-ordinator for Barnet's Sick Children's Service – but I left that in 2001 after which I worked sessionally as a

couples counsellor with Relate and as a Family Mediator, finally 'retiring' from Mediation during Covid. I had stopped counselling several years earlier.

By the way, nothing I have ever seen about Chris Gunning ever refers to his time at Hendon County! There was a two-page spread about him (which I sent to Beryl) in a recent issue of *The Spectator*.

After leaving school, **Paresh Pau (1977 – 1984)** studied Computer Science and Cybernetics at Reading University, graduating with a B.Sc. degree in 1987. For the last 28 years, he has been running his own business, [Technoworld PLC](http://TechnoworldPLC.com), selling desktop and laptop computers. The company has received a prestigious award as a Top 100 firm in the Sunday Times Fast Track for business growth.

Paresh is also a member of the Lions Club of Hendon, which serves the local community by fundraising for worthy causes, social services, hamper donations to elderly day centres, entertaining disabled or disadvantaged children, and so on.

Tony Norman (1959 – 1966) has had an eclectic career since leaving school, which has included being a *New Musical Express* journalist, official photographer for Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, and – more recently – the brains behind two remarkable musicals. The first – *A Christmas Carol by Candlelight* – was broadcast four times on BBC Radio 4 Extra on Christmas Eve last year. The musical featured original songs and classic carols linked together by a heartfelt narration from the late Nicholas Parsons. Nicholas was 95 when he recorded the story of Ebenezer Scrooge in 2018. Tony's musical was featured as part of the radio station's Nicholas Parsons day. You can read, hear, and view much more at the official website: www.not-humbug.co.uk

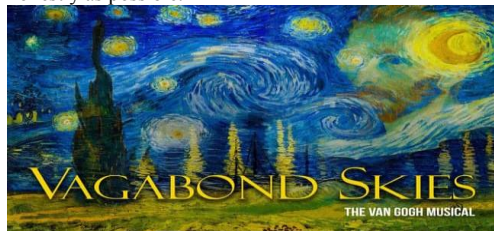


Here is a picture of Tony (on the right) with Nicholas, who passed away in January 2020.

Tony hasn't stopped there – he's spent a lot of time in recent years working on *Vagabond Skies – The Van Gogh Musical* with a brilliant orchestrator and musical arranger called Mark Edwards.

This exceptional new musical combines an original score with an array of emotional and memorable lyrics to tell the dramatic story of Vincent Van Gogh's life as an artist. Today he may be the most famous artist in the world and seen as a genius ... but, as the musical portrays, during his life he was dismissed as a madman.

“The Vagabond Skies musical took a long time to complete,” says Tony, a long-time Eastbourne resident. “When writing about the world’s best-loved painter, I had to be sure I was telling his story as accurately and honestly as possible.”



Research in Amsterdam, Paris and Provence was vital in forming a clear picture of Van Gogh’s troubled life. Central to the production, letters to and from his brother Theo provided an accurate first-hand and fascinating insight into the artist’s many trials and tribulations. This intriguing take on Vincent’s life has never before been explored through music on stage.

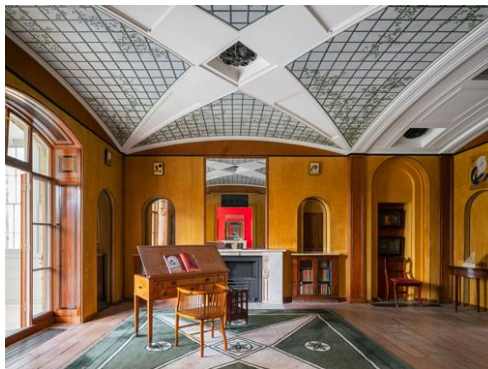
Van Gogh’s own words have been cleverly woven into the lyrics of his story as *Vagabond Skies* unfolds, exploring love, rage, sorrow and one man’s emotional conflict that represents this artist’s life. He sold only one painting during his lifetime – hard to imagine, given the global demand and enormous monetary value associated with his art today.

It is hoped that *Vagabond Skies* will transfer to the West End and beyond, but its premiere is onstage at the Devonshire Park Theatre, in Eastbourne, from 12th to 14th September 2024. If the magazine has been published in time, Tony would be delighted if any Old Hendonians can come and see the show. Full details can be found on the official website www.vagabondskies.com – including audio and video recordings.

Tony concludes: “I first got the idea for a Van Gogh musical 50 years ago. Well, nobody can call me a quitter!”

The Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery in Ealing Green was the elegant setting for an exhibition this summer featuring the work of **Sinta Tantra (1991 – 1995)**, an acclaimed artist who works in many different types of media.

Inspired by Paul Scheerbaart’s 1912 novel *The Light Club of Batavia*, from which the exhibition took its name, Sinta’s compositions explored themes of light, wealth, and the duality of beauty and colonialism. Gold – central to her exhibition – symbolised energy, vanity, and extraction, highlighting Sinta’s fascination with its historical and cultural significance. Additionally, personal touches were woven into her work; silhouettes within her pieces traced from sketches made in the tropical valley near her family’s home in Ubud, Bali, adding a layer of personal narrative to the exhibition. You can find more pictures and information by visiting <https://sintatantra.com/exhibitions/120/overview/>



And finally ...

Professor Sir Philip Cohen FRS FRSE FMedSci (1956 – 1963) is planning to hold a reunion lunch at the Royal Society for former classmates in his year at the end of this September.

Sir Philip would very much like to hear from anyone who was in his year who may be interested to take part – please contact your Editor in the first instance.



SCHOOL SCARS

When I went to school, from age 13 to 18, in Hendon, a London suburb, it was just after World War II, and in the field behind the school were several surface air-raid shelters, which were now being used for storage. They were not locked. Once, when, during a holiday, I had been up all night, hitch-hiking, with a friend, to a different part of the country, we got back only just in time for school. I was too tired even to attend class, so I went into one of those structures, lay down on a bench, and fell asleep.

What seems remarkable to me, remembering this episode, is how unusual it all was – the hitch-hiking, the air-raid shelters ... and the School itself. As to the hitch-hiking: this had been my very first trip, of many I made, while still in my teens, all over Europe, in the Middle East, and across America. Most people in those days – and probably even more today – considered hitch-hiking a risky business. But I'm glad to say that, in all my hundreds of rides, I never once had a bad experience. On the contrary, this seemed to be a good way of meeting good people. And I learned that the best way of thanking them for giving me a ride was to get them talking about their own lives and interests.

But another part of this memory which seems of particular significance were the air-raid shelters, which, at that time, were still very common, sometimes even built on the paved roadways. With my family, I had been, for the seven years of war, safely "over here," first in Canada, then in the U.S. Meanwhile, "over there," the British people went through a terrible time. Although no invasion ever took place, there were years of raids by bombers, and, towards the end of the war, by pilotless "buzz-bombs" (which could sometimes be shot down), and "rocket bombs" against which there was no defence. (They were so fast that the noise of their coming was heard only after they struck.)

While we had been spared all of that, the evidence of it, in the form of ruined buildings, or just gaps where houses and buildings had once been, was everywhere to be seen. And there were the horrifying first-person

accounts, from our relatives and friends, of what it had been like, night after night, when the bombs came down. This was all part of the so-called "Battle of Britain," in which Hitler, like Napoleon, having conquered the rest of Europe, attempted to eliminate his last Western enemy, before turning East, against Russia.

And that memory of the shelter incident also made me think of the School itself. One unusual thing about it was that it was "co-educational," in an era when most British schools were still either exclusively for boys or for girls. But separation persisted to some extent. For example, in Assembly, we stayed on opposite sides of the hall.

Another striking feature was the

personality of our Headmaster, Mr. E.W. Maynard Potts. He was tall, with a ringing voice and piercing eyes. He always wore a black academic gown. Most of us were to some extent afraid of him. In those days, "corporal punishment" in schools was still permitted, and it was the "Head" who administered it -- once upon me in his office, with a cane, on my buttocks, bending over his desk. That was for having dared to criticize my English teacher's methods on an examination paper. My parents had to go and beg him not to expel me.

Remarkably, this man kept in touch with me for years after I graduated, writing me sometimes long personal letters. And, at one point, after I made a commercial success in America of selling my own epigrams, he wanted to become my British business agent!

Another aspect of the School, during my time there, was that about one third of the students were Jewish. This reflected a fairly recent change in the nearby communities. Since Christian prayers were said in the regular Assembly, we had our own separate "Jewish Assembly," meeting in a classroom.

One big event of the school year had been an annual Christmas Carol Festival. But, with the difference now in the school population, it was decided to cancel this event. This brought a great outcry from all the non-Jewish families. Mr. Potts' job may have been in jeopardy. At any rate, the cancellation was cancelled.



1947 - 1952

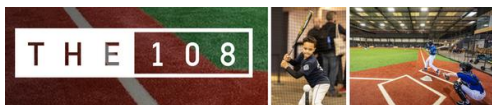
HENDON In the News

On Sunday 10th December last year, the first new London railway station for over a decade threw open its doors. **Brent Cross West**, which sits between Cricklewood and Hendon Thameslink stations, was one of the first rail projects in England to be delivered by a local authority.



While many people braved a cold December morning to be the first to board a train from the impressive new station, hundreds more turned out to celebrate the official opening by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and London Assembly Member Cllr Anne Clarke, who represents the Cricklewood Ward. The crowds were treated to live music from carnival steel drums and a brass band, as well as arts and crafts workshops and food and drinks offered by local businesses.

The local 189 bus, which runs from Brent Cross Shopping Centre, has since been re-routed to serve the new station.



On 23rd January this year, **Brent Cross Town** officially celebrated the opening of 'The 108', the first indoor baseball and softball centre in Europe, and a new world-class sporting facility for Barnet.

The 108 provides first-class training facilities which will help grow local and UK talent. The centre has four batting cages which have been provided by the popular American baseball game centre HitTrax, as well as two throwing lanes and a full-size adult infield.

The centre has a sports bar, a café and a popular American restaurant. Visitors can also buy baseball merchandise, and there is space available to hire to host parties and events. For more information and to book a slot, you can visit the108.co.uk.

The 108 is less than five minutes' walk from the new Brent Cross West Station.

Schools in Barnet achieved outstanding results in the 2022 – 2023 academic year, with many schools showing improvements compared to the national average.

Almost all schools across the early years provision (birth to five years old), all the way through to key stage (KS) 5 (16 – 18 years old), performed significantly well, with attainment scores and national averages much higher than in previous years.

Some key results:

- Across the early years provision, the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development increased in Barnet to 70.4%, taking the borough above the national average of 67.3% in 2023. Approximately 235 more pupils in Barnet achieved a good level of development in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.
- KS2 (7 to 11 years old): scores in reading, writing and maths combined (the three Rs!) remained in the top 20%, with the progress made between KS1 (5 to 7 years old), and KS2 being in the top 10% nationally.
- Over the last six years, A-level results in Barnet have consistently been in the top 5% of the country.

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb, Cabinet Member for Family Friendly Barnet, said: "It is extremely positive to see schools in Barnet outperforming national averages. We are lucky to have some of the best schools in the country in our borough.

"This year's achievements demonstrate just how much hard work pupils are putting into their studies, and are a testament to the tremendous dedication of staff and the whole school community."

Barnet students' progression rates on to Higher Education are third highest in the country for non-free school meals (FSM) students and sixth highest for FSM students. The percentage of 17- and 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training is extremely low, ranked fourth-best nationally.

Barnet Council has given the go-ahead to a new **sustainable drainage and flood defence strategy** to mitigate future flood risks in the borough. The approved plan urges developers to incorporate eco-friendly flood defence measures, such as rainwater harvesting and water butts. Emphasising the importance of natural solutions, like planting trees and shrubs, the Sustainable Drainage Strategy mandates their inclusion in all



developments, regardless of size.

With a focus on averting flooding threats linked to the borough's growing population, the strategy provides developers with technical guidance for various stages of the planning application process.

Rain gardens are also being installed across the borough, to reduce the risk of localised flooding and reduce the impact excess water has on roads and pavements. The sustainable water drainage systems feature specially selected plants designed to absorb rainwater to help stop sewer systems becoming overwhelmed – one of the main causes of localised flooding.

Barnet Council is to receive £200,000 in funding to launch a new festival in the borough, thanks to winning a Mayor of London Cultural Impact Award.

The **Light & Flight festival** will be developed in partnership with the [RAF Museum](#) based in Colindale, and will celebrate Hendon's crucial role in the development of aviation. The festival will hail the pioneering aviators who defined the early era of powered flight, including trailblazing women pilots Amy Johnson and Edith Maud Cook, who defied the societal norms of the day and made flying history. Other leaps forward will be recognised, such as Hendon being the take-off aerodrome for the world's first air mail delivery.



In the spring, a brand-new twin panel memorial for the late Queen Elizabeth II was unveiled at the Queens Road entrance to **Hendon Park**. The panels were generously funded by local individuals and institutions.

Originally conceived as a celebration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, after she passed away in September 2022 they were re-imagined as a celebration of her long life and reign.

Councillor Tony Vourou has become the **60th Mayor of Barnet**, after being officially sworn in during the Annual Council Meeting held on 21st May at Hendon Town Hall.



Councillor Vourou takes over from the borough's previous Mayor, Councillor Nagus Narenthira. The Mayoress is his wife, Mrs Caroline Vourou.

Councillor Vourou has chosen Macmillan Cancer Support and Age UK Barnet as his charities, and fundraising for cardiac equipment at Barnet General Hospital, during his Mayoral term.

With the support of the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, national waterways charity Canal & River Trust has started to install 14 new tern rafts, providing island habitats to support the common tern water birds at the **Welsh Harp Brent Reservoir**. The island habitats will provide a safe space from flooding and predators for the birds, hopefully improving their breeding success.



As well as being a place for sailing, watersports and walking, the reservoir is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for the rich diversity of wildlife found on site, including water birds and 16 protected plant species.

The count for the Parliamentary constituencies of Chipping Barnet, Finchley & Golders Green and Hendon in the **2024 General Election** took place at the RAF Museum, Colindale on the night of 4th July.

David Pinto-Duschinsky of the Labour Party was elected as the Member of Parliament for the Hendon constituency, by

the slenderest of majorities – just 15 votes.

Labour MPs were also elected for the Chipping Barnet constituency and the Finchley & Golders Green constituency.



DAVID EADON MEETS...



DAVID ELLIS



David Ellis – a former classmate of your Editor – was a student at Hendon School from 1968 to 1975. Whilst he gravitated towards the science subjects, he then went on to study law. But many years later, he deepened his interest in astronomy at University College London and their local observatory in Mill Hill – an interest he keenly maintains to this day.



What was the general atmosphere like in Hendon School when you were there?

Much lighter than I imagine it must have been during the relatively sober period of the postwar years. Many of the teachers would have had that background, and with it a certain discipline, sprinkled with a degree of humour in the way they taught. But there was also a younger group of teachers coming on board, who brought a youthful dynamism to the school.

In which areas of education did you excel?

Well ... I certainly struggled with one or two areas such as Art and PE! But the school gave me a certain interest in languages, including Latin – and with Mr Western, an enjoyment of both listening to music and trying to play the violin. As I went through the school, it was the experiments in Chemistry, Physics, and Biology that particularly caught my interest.

Are there any amusing anecdotes you can relate from your time at the school?

I will share one from the start and one from near the end of my schooldays at Hendon. One of my very first memories was as a young first-former looking out at the mown lawn on the school fields from the Hall: the previous year's Sixth Form had daubed it to announce that

Mr Potts must go, and I was trying to understand the significance of their choice of words, which took most of that first term to fade from view.

At the end of my schooling, it was the fact that somebody had managed to wire the Lower Sixth lockers in such a way that the closing of a locker could set off the school alarm bell!

If I asked you to sum up your time at the school in one sentence – what would you say?

A most exhilarating time, both in terms of getting an education, making friends, and beginning to understand the breadth of the world around me.

How has your career unfolded since leaving Hendon School?

My working life went through several phases: first I practised law both as a barrister and solicitor, then I worked within investment banks and asset management groups, particularly on new business, new products, and transactions.

What have your career achievements taught you?

They have taught me that it's not just diligence that pays, but also quite a lot of inspiration, good luck, and important "sliding doors" as well as key decisions you make at various different stages in your life.

Have you pursued any hobbies or special interests?

The interest my parents gave me, in stamps, has kind of moved away. In its place, I became fascinated by our solar system, our universe, and the observatory that stands in Mill Hill – so I pursued a course over many years at London University.

If an older teenager asked you for advice in setting up their own business – what would you say?

I'd always advise them to gain a good understanding of law, accounting, tax etc. And before you go anywhere near setting up any sort of business, you should understand what your opportunity is – the potential revenues, of course – but also the liabilities that could flow if things don't work out.

What are your immediate future projects?

I've reached a stage in my life where I'm semi-retired. So some of my projects are still work-related, in terms of advising on cyber-security, AI, and smart contracts on the internet. But I'm also interested to volunteer – and I have done so – at the Science Museum, the Globe Theatre, and the U3A, where I've been able to give talks on areas such as the impact of Brexit and a fictitious journey through the solar system.

How would your friends describe you in three words or phrases?

Neat handwriting and books; industrious; and – I hope – a good friend when needed.

Which qualities do you most admire in a person?

Honesty, discretion, and kindness.

Thank you, David, for giving up your time for our Old Hendonian readers!

REG BECKLEY REMEMBERS



1942 – 1948

I had the role of “M.C.” for a number of Old Hendonians Association (OHA) dances in the early 1950s, most of which were held in the old school hall.

The attendance at these functions was somewhat patchy compared to occasions where we branched out and held them in the somewhat more convivial surroundings of “The Midland” in West Hendon or the “Red Lion” in Kingsbury. So, to add variety to one of the school-held dances, I invited a fellow OHA member to show his conjuring act.

For the 2006 edition of the *Old Hendonian*, I named the conjurer as **George Wagland (1944 – 1948)**. However, it turns out I was wrong – instead, he became a TV cameraman and was involved in some hair-raising live filming of rock climbing. Not so long ago, with the BBC re-showing some of its older comedies, George was listed as vision supervisor in the 1983 production of “Just Good Friends.”

Anyway ... at the end of the evening, I and the conjurer set off walking down the dimly lit Queens Road, when suddenly a police control car pulled up alongside and the occupants barred our passage. Apparently, the very large suitcases we were carrying containing the conjurer’s tricks had been mistaken for burglars’ “swag”!!! Red faces all round ... but they did give us a lift to Hendon Central tube station.



MEDICAL MUSINGS



YEN YEE CHONG (1972 – 1979)

“AI” Artificial Intelligence – Guiding us, or Eating us up?

“AI” – Artificial Intelligence – is meant to be a new technology that aids human beings to the point where people do not know the difference, or see, AI as performing better than humans. Maybe it will change the concept of work forever, where as a faithful personal assistant – we won’t have to work as long or as hard as we do now. Or, in an Orwellian 1984 world, it can make decisions itself and these “super” AI apps can run the world unsupervised. Scary fiction?

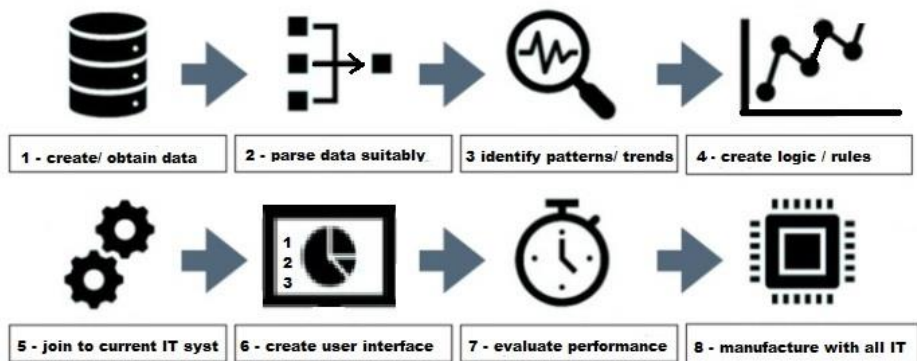
Some intelligent AI systems have been running for years. Forex and stock trading systems have been automatically operating millions of buy-sell transactions on Wall Street and the world. Docklands Light Railway London trains operate independently without drivers, like Google driverless cars.

Alan Turing (of WW2 Bletchley Park decoding) postulated the “Turing test” (1950) – when one person has an interaction or conversation with a machine system hidden behind and believes it to be a human. Like being an aide or servant maybe. How advanced intelligence can AI get? In 1996 IBM’s Deep Blue AI computer beat world chess champion Garry Kasparov in a best of six match. The prescient 1970 film “Colossus: The Forbin Project” predicted an advanced American computer military self-defence system, “Colossus,” that evolved to be so intelligent that it could take full control over human beings and impose some draconian diktat of how it thought the world should operate.

Artificial intelligence (AI) may not yet be ready to replace all human work, but it will simplify or assist complex decision-making and help humans operate a lower physical and mental burden. AI-assisted operations are ideally suited to tasks processing huge amounts of structured data. To understand AI operations and how they integrate into complex human-machine interfaces at work, take a look at the simple diagram on the next page.

Obviously, human and computer logic develop non-linearly, with some hiccups along the way. An early computer auto-translator was given the input text “Out of sight, out of mind” to





AI systems business project stages

translate into several languages then back into English, and came up with “Invisible idiot”. [Your Editor remembers Mr Betts telling us that story as an “aside” during a History lesson!] As AI expanded, it took on some pretty crucial mission-critical tasks. We’ve witnessed US Patriot air defence system blasting Russian S-300 missiles and guided drones during aerial attacks on Kyiv this year. Radar pickup and target identification and acquisition systems kicked in early to ensure that Patriot SAM missiles hit Russian targets before they hit Ukrainian targets.

In non-military applications, we often do not study adequately how AI rules operate in our lives and if we need to challenge them. Passenger aircraft started to fly with AI actively taking control on various occasions. AI helps us to gain a meaningful picture from a mountain of information – sometimes from a myriad of sources. Converting the parsed data into a suitable format that is easily readable and compatible for accurate AI modelling is critical if we are to attain better decision-making. Consider an aircraft’s array of computers and sensors that display speed, direction, altitude, pitch, yaw, engine thrust etc. Now, the 737 MAX plane was designed to copy the flight behaviour of the previous Boeing 737 NG thus representing the new MAX as “737 flight tests” – which makes for faster and easier official FAA certification and cheaper pilot training. Boeing found the new position and larger size of the MAX engines tended to push the aircraft up during flight. Engineers decided to enlist AI help to counter that disconcerting tendency – enter stage left the AI MCAS System that obviated expensive major structural aircraft redesign. Thus, AI stepped in to save Boeing from prohibitive costs of re-engineering their new aircraft, while avoiding expensive FAA re-certification and costly pilot re-training. But sadly, MCAS AI system could take total control of the flight, “stabilizing” the aircraft despite the pilots’ actions at the helm. MCAS became infamous for two fatal accidents that killed all the 737 MAX passengers and crew during flights from Ethiopia and Indonesia.

Recently, people have learnt to tell AI computer systems what they want, and AI then does it. AI can think and act independently after your command, then do research surfing the Web, use other apps, draft music, university theses, novels, even legal contracts and business payments. ChatGPT from Microsoft is prevalent – partly because it’s inexpensive to buy and sold by Microsoft. ChatGPT asks you to enter your desired objective and AI prompts you to detail further modelling

responses. Your task (or in AI “goal state”) can be replacing common jobs – call centre, secretary, estate agent, car salesperson etc. AI asks the customer to create a task or objectives list and work out logically how to deliver it. AI systems owners have even bolder visions for how AI agents can be deployed. There's real fear that AI software apps will take over your job and throw you into redundancy. Example: the medical workplace. We're not talking about simple registration / checkin / checkout of patients – we're talking automation of complex doctor and medical specialist tasks.

The following headline appeared in *The Guardian*, 20 Nov 2023:

“Patient privacy fears as US spy tech firm Palantir wins \$400m NHS patient data contract”. The awarding of a contract to create a new data platform prompts immediate concerns about security of medical records.

Tomorrow's brave new healthcare world could be utilising NHS patient databases sold by UK government PMs Boris and Rishi to a large US AI software firm without Parliamentary consultation or voting. Integrating this raw data into data parsing apps, then running AI modelling algorithms and logic rules, will synthesize NHS patient treatment and drugs doses into lucrative business opportunities. Sold to NHS local authorities keen to cut costs, real NHS staff can find that their access to patient data, and their ability to reason and offer advice, become overshadowed by “superior” performance of AI systems.

The AI future is now, it's not far off that a junior healthcare assistant powered by AI modelling could excel in NHS work tasks far beyond today's doctors, e.g. such as diagnosing cancer. An astute business manager in any hospital, be it North America, Europe or NHS, can compare healthcare costs. An NHS General Practitioner doctor's average salary is £99,409 p.a. (as of October 2023). An AI healthcare app can run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, doing diagnoses, performing treatments, or dispensing drugs. Its knowledge base will be the compiled NHS national patient database.

In Chinese TCM medicine and Shiatsu, I can only base my medical knowledge skills on some 18,000 patients I treated over 21 years. Even an NHS GP doctor, treating some 60,000 patients over 30 years, will be hard-pressed to compete with an AI app comparing so many millions of patients' records. Job insecurity might abound. Sack anaesthetists, radiologists, pharmacists and other medics around the world?

Will the world's hospitals adopt AI systems? It mainly depends upon cost and acceptability of machines taking over human jobs. Who is to be sued in cases of wrong or harmful diagnosis / treatment – the hospital or the AI vendor? Will the AI-role be passive diagnosis adviser app, or fully-responsible problem solver and patient-carer? While state-of-the-art researchers create ever more clever robot arms, they're still a long way from creating soft, sensitive hands that treat a patient accurately on the correct acupuncture points, as I do. Still, I recognize and fear the ruthless marketing of some slick profit-seeking AI tech giants. But, I am old school – and I don't mean Hendon! For me, it's a question of morality; but I would not like to live in a world where computer AI systems diagnose, “talk to” patients and apply all healthcare treatment – that would be an impersonal hell.



THEN AND NOW ...

When I casually mentioned to my parents that I was presenting at Hendon School, they replied, “you do know that’s where we both went to school?” It was then called Hendon County Grammar School, under the headmastership of E. W. Maynard Potts who encouraged students with ability to reach for the stars. My father, Bernie Myers, then went on to inform me that he was awarded the final State Scholarship, before the system was discontinued, to study History and Economics at LSE – a significant achievement in 1962, and one which set him on a most remarkable career path. My mother, whilst academically able, found that girls weren’t encouraged as much to continue to University, although she did subsequently attain a Master’s Degree from UCL when she attended as a more mature student. Having known each other both from school and through my father’s younger brothers, my parents married in 1967 – fast forward and they are still together after 57 years!!

Following a brief chat with the lovely lady on reception about my connection to the school, she kindly put me in touch with the archivist – your Editor – who sent me the articles and honours list with my father’s name on it.

I was presenting at the school in the autumn term last year, as part of the **Your Life You Choose** (YLYC) programme, which was launched in 2014 and is led by magistrates in the North West London Justice Area. YLYC is an anti-crime schools initiative specifically geared to Year 7 students, and many of the schools invite us back to present on a regular basis. In fact, it was my second consecutive year presenting to the Year 7s at Hendon School.

YLYC delivers a one day multi-agency presentation to educate young people about the consequences of crime, not only for the offender but for their family and friends, the wider community and of course the victim. YLYC brings together Magistrates, Police Service, safer schools officers and trident officers, Prison Service, London Ambulance Service, Youth Justice Service, Prevent, EOTAS¹ – inclusion officers, Pathways – run by ex-offenders, and education consultants on cyberbullying and sexting, gangs and county-lines.

In a rotation of professional workshops, students look at how society deals with people who commit crimes. We explore students’ preconceptions and stereotyping in relation to criminal activity. We raise awareness of the long-lasting and far-reaching effect of crime. The students discuss life choices and consequences of making the wrong choices. Our programme encourages young people to make informed decisions and to understand they have a choice about the path they take in life.

This year I found the students to be engaged and enthusiastic about the programme, asking intelligent and well-thought-through questions, and actively participated during the day. We spent some time talking about a video that was screened in the morning and the choices that young people make and the impact it has on their future. I felt very privileged to be at a school where the choices made by my parents in their academic and personal lives did, indeed, shape my whole future.

Lyndsey Brand, whose parents are **Bernard Myers (1955 – 1962)** and **Sandra Myers (1958 – 1963)**

¹ EOTAS stands for “Education Otherwise Than At School” – education designed for the needs of youngsters who, for whatever reason, can’t go to a mainstream or special school.

CLASS OF 1957 – 1964 REUNION

After a long time in the planning, much preparation on the part of Carole and Reg Edward and your co-organisers cooking up a storm, at last, twenty-two of the class of Hendonian alumni who left school some 59 years previously converged on the Edward home in Stanmore on the afternoon of 4 June last year for our reunion.

It was good to see so many of our classmates still able to walk and talk unassisted! Sadly, we had quite a few last minute cancellations, and we wish those who were unable to attend well. This time, we extended our invitation to include spouses and partners, on whom we have conferred honorary Hendonian membership, and indeed, they did bring the average age down by at least a decade. It was a lovely

afternoon. The sun shone, it was warm and we all sat at three tables in the garden and enjoyed a drink or three and a buffet of poached salmon, a selection of sides and salads and veggie quiches followed by a dessert buffet offering diverse delights. Perhaps our memories needed a little jogging in some cases to recognise classmates, but generally, memories of our time at Hendon Grammar remained undimmed – even if many of us could hardly recall what we had done the day before! It was good to catch up on what we had all been doing since our last reunion. Interestingly, most of us are either still working or have even embarked on second careers. For example, legal eagle David Gottler – who hasn't changed much but wore a name badge to avoid any geriatric confusion – is now an expert London guide, which he says is a great deal more fun than the law; distinguished Prof. Stephen Neidle says he is working harder than ever; clever Carole is still spending many hours coaching young hopefuls for the private schools of their parents' choice; Simon Quadrat gave up a career as a barrister and is a very successful painter; the Reverend Susan Fellowes

née Sanglier is continuing to look after her flock, and Barrie Nathan is still teaching budding legal eagles. I, too, have been spectacularly unsuccessful at retiring for the past 17 years, and am still busy translating. Many of us are busy with other activities too – for instance, with teaching, working with charities, U3A or volunteering of some kind – and we are all finding it hard to imagine how we ever found the time to work full-time.

The ambience was relaxed and happy, and a great deal of laughter rang out throughout the afternoon as we recalled funny incidents at Hendon and the stranger quirks of some of

the teaching staff. We all agreed that we were indeed the *jeunesse dorée* generation, born after WW2 at a time when the NHS was first rate, state education was free, and secondary education –

especially at the county grammar schools of blessed memory – was mostly excellent. Carole and I had said that this would probably be the last of our Hendonian reunions; however, on seeing how enjoyable we all found this one, our resolve not to organise another reunion is weakening! Classmates suggested that we don't wait another five years ... well, we shall see. Our thanks go to Carole and Reg for so generously opening their lovely home as the venue for our reunion. The success of the afternoon is very much the result of their hard work.

If anyone would like email details for classmates of our year, please let your Editor know, and unless there are objections to forwarding them, I can provide them. We are so grateful for all your lovely messages of thanks. Meanwhile, take care of yourselves, stay in touch and – watch this space – we *may* organise another reunion in, say, two or three years' time. Carole and I work well together – so if all else fails and we lose the lot, we shall launch ourselves as event caterers!

Marion Godfrey (née Wiener)



CLASS OF 1960 – 1967 REUNION

Perhaps a “reunion” is rather a grand name for the twice-yearly lunch gatherings of the Golders Girls (named after Golders Rise of course). Many of us meet anyway in ones and twos throughout the year, as we have been friends since at least 1960 when we entered Hendon County Grammar School, as it was in our day. Usually between eight and twelve of us lunch together, these days most often in the Waterloo area, as it is good from the point of view of transport.

We made a point of meeting on 18th June last year in order to catch Hilary Daniels during her only week in London whilst on her trip to Europe from her home in Melbourne, Australia. There too, were Irene Beber, Andrea Pack, Viv Altman, Geraldine Max, Nita Shatz from Patcham, near Brighton, and me, Hazel Birney (I use the surnames by which we were known at school).

The previous day, Hilary and Irene had visited Barbara Brigden at her home in Aylesbury.

Amongst the group’s grandchildren, the oldest is preparing for A-levels, and the youngest is just five months old and preparing to sit up!

One of us still works full-time and another teaches part-time. The rest of us I would categorise as layabouts ... yet we all seem to be having very busy retirements. Travel is a shared enthusiasm. Golders Girls must have been getting together for at least 25 years, with exchanges on WhatsApp in between. Sally-Anne Lewis is our organiser, though she was one of several unable to attend this time along with Shirley Benjamin, Jackie Southern and Judith Phillip, who have come to some of the previous lunches.

Hazel Dakers, née Birney



Pictured, left to right: Geraldine Max, Nita Shatz, Hazel Birney, Hilary Daniels, Irene Beber, Andrea Pack, Viv Altman



Dear Old Hendonians,

Reflecting on a Year of Growth and Achievement

We hope that this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. As one academic year ends, and a new begins, it is with great pleasure that we share with you a snapshot of events, achievements, and milestones that have shaped our school community over the past year.

Our academic programmes have continued to flourish, providing students with rich and diverse learning experiences that foster critical thinking, creativity, and a passion for lifelong learning. We strive to meet the evolving needs of our students, and prepare them for success in a rapidly changing world.

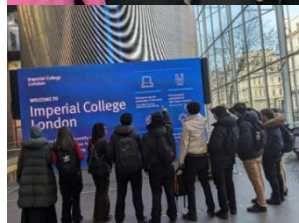


A trip to the Imperial War Museum in January gave Year 9 students plenty to talk about, especially interacting with exhibits and the focus on what it was like to be in the trenches or involved in the suffragette movement.

Sixth form Politics students visited Parliament, attending workshops to debate the role of pressure groups as representatives of the voice of the people.



In December, a group of science students met at Imperial College for lectures by professors of bio-engineering, material sciences and space physics. They also took a tour of the university campus.



Year 9 students once again visited Belsize Square Synagogue to learn more about the Holocaust. The day included a talk from the Rabbi, a presentation summarising the key points and the significance of the Holocaust, excellent discussion sessions, and finally a memorial ritual where a number of Hendon School students took part by lighting a candle in memory of the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides.



Our Provision for Deaf Students (PDS) led a sign language session for international visitors, covering basic greetings and the finger-spelling alphabet.

We celebrated British Science Week with a theme of 'Time'. Students participated in an engineering challenge, explored how cameras capture a specific moment in time, and went back in time to investigate timekeeping, making their own clocks with sand, water and pendulums.



In July, as a final curriculum project, the KS3 Enrichment Week saw students undertaking a range of exciting activities. Year 7 undertook a scavenger hunt in London, orienteering in Golders Hill, and explored Greek Gods and Percy Jackson through the 'Hendon Quest of Olympus.' Our Year 8 students enjoyed developing their analytical and problem-solving skills in a STEM-based forensic crime solution and through building a



Rube-Goldberg machine to ring a bell with a ball. Later in the week, they compared the Brighton Pavilion art with famous Brighton graffiti – there was also a little spare time to spend on the beach!



The focus for Year 9 students was very much on outdoor activities. These included canoeing and rafting near the Welsh Harp Reservoir, high ropes at Trent Park, orienteering on Hampstead Heath, and hiking in the Dollis Valley Greenwalk.



Our vibrant arts programme offers students opportunities to explore their creative talents and express themselves through various mediums. This year, our students participated in art exhibitions, theatrical performances, literary festivals, dance competitions and music concerts, showcasing their talents and passion for the Arts.

This year, our amazing Year 11 photography students explored the co-existence of humans and nature. Another GCSE group visited the graffiti tunnel in London, and considered camera angles and location shots.



Year 8 students created self-portrait paintings inspired by Cubism and the British-Nigerian artist Chris Ofili, who created *No Woman No Cry* in homage to Doreen Lawrence and her fight for justice for her son Stephen. Students studied the context and meaning of this painting and created their own expressive versions. We were really impressed with the joyful nature of the artwork, and the way that students showed excellent team working skills while collaborating in pairs.

The photography and art exhibitions at the end of the year gave us an opportunity to celebrate the phenomenal talent of our students.



Music, dance and drama performances have also impressed audiences with their creative and skilful presentations, including at the 'Step Into Dance Battle', the Barnet festival and a number of school presentations.

Our sports teams have achieved remarkable success this year, demonstrating teamwork, sportsmanship, and dedication on and off the field. From winning championship titles to setting new records, our student-athletes have represented our school with pride and distinction. At Hendon there are 20 sports clubs running every single week! The highest attended clubs are trampolining, netball, table tennis and football.



In March, for International Women's Day, Hendon students were determined to be part of the 'Biggest Football Session Ever' once again in 2024. Competing in a league format until lunch, the girls had a lot of football to play. Their efforts, organisation and sportsmanship were superb as they competed vigorously for a top 4 spot. In a celebration of skill, unity, and girl



power, twelve Year 7 teams, each representing a nation, battled it out on the pitch in an electrifying International Women's Day football tournament for girls.

We are extremely proud of Year 10 student, Leon, who competed in the English Schools Swimming Championship in Coventry in March. Leon won a silver medal for the London region in the intermediate 200m backstroke with his time of 2:16:09.

Service to others is a core part of our value of "Belong", and this year our students have dedicated themselves to making a positive impact in the community and beyond. Through volunteer projects, service-learning initiatives, and fundraising campaigns, our students have demonstrated compassion, empathy, and a commitment to social responsibility. This year, students have organised a number of events, workshops, and seminars to raise awareness about global issues and promote dialogue and collaboration on topics such as sustainability, social justice, human rights, and peacebuilding. These initiatives have encouraged students to become informed, engaged global citizens and advocates for positive change in the world.



In October, students campaigned for the government to pay for a school counsellor in every school. Celebrities such as Peter Crouch, Ronan Kemp, Paddy McGuinness and Amanda Holden pledged their support. In July, students attended a youth event at Methodist



Central Hall to work with other young campaigners and celebrate what has been achieved.

Several HS6 students also had the opportunity to meet Sam Carling MP, who at just 22 years old is the youngest MP ever to sit in the House of Commons, and is keen to listen to the voice of youth.



Ten Year 9 students have been selected to represent Hendon as part of the Alan Senitt Upstanders Programme, which allows the participants to learn about each other: their different cultures, religions and communities and at the same time reflect on themselves and gain leadership skills that will benefit their local community and serve them throughout their lives.



Our Student Voice Team is an important leadership group within school. This year, they have made great changes to the way that we organise our canteen, and also created a new



house system which is promoted through mentoring, assemblies, social media and parent emails, forming the backbone of our rewards scheme.

Hendon School is committed to fostering global citizenship and promoting cross-cultural understanding among our students. Through various international programmes and initiatives, we have sought to broaden students' perspectives, expand their horizons, and cultivate a sense of empathy and respect for people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Established partnerships with schools and organisations around the world provide students with the opportunity to develop intercultural competence, language skills, and a global mindset. Our links with Konan High School continue, with a visit to Japan in October and a return visit for them to England in March.



As we look ahead to the future, we are filled with optimism and excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead. We remain committed to our mission of providing a transformative education that empowers students to excel academically, pursue their passions, and make a positive impact in the world.

The Old Hendonians are an integral part of our school community. This year, we have continued to strengthen our ties with alumni through various initiatives and activities, including networking events, guest speaking engagements, career guidance, fundraising initiatives, and alumni mentoring programs. Thank you for all your contributions. Do let us know if you would like to be part of our work in this way. To celebrate the 110th Anniversary of Hendon School we will be holding a special reunion on Sunday 29th September 2024. We very much hope that you will be able to join us – you will find more details on page 2.

In closing, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, for your ongoing support, loyalty, and dedication to our school. Your contributions have helped shape the lives of countless students, and continue to play a vital role in the success and continued excellence of our school community.

With warmest regards

Rhona Povey

Craig McGuire

Headteachers, Hendon School

FRIENDS OF HENDON SCHOOL

For administrative reasons, the Friends of Hendon School account is closing – the final balance is being used towards the cost of building a smart new wall in place of the hedge at the front of the school, which has frankly seen better days.

As our regular readers will no doubt recall, the “Friends” was a valuable means of providing extra resources and improving facilities for the benefit of the school and its students, which were not catered for out of public funds. To make it possible to publish this magazine, the “Friends” also covered the cost of printing, postage, and other expenses.

The principle behind this idea won’t be changing. Future donations – which are most welcome and always encouraged – can still be made, but now to Hendon School’s main bank account. Arrangements are in place to “ring-fence” monies received from Old Hendonians, so they are put to the same uses as in the past. There are a few simple things to bear in mind which will help the school’s finance office to identify your donation and take the necessary action. You’ll find more about this on the donation form which comes with the magazine. Finally ... with the increasing use of online banking and the continued relentless closure of physical bank branches – believe it or not, there will be none at all left in Hendon by the end of the year! – the finance office would much prefer to be able to process future donations by electronic bank transfer rather than by cheque if at all possible.

Many thanks in anticipation and appreciation of your kind co-operation and your continued generosity.





FROM THE ARCHIVES



THOUGHTS OF A TEACHING PUPIL

As a pupil myself, I still smile at the thought that I have usurped the throne behind the teacher's desk. For every Sunday morning I teach Hebrew and religion to a class of very young children.

At first I was extremely apprehensive, for I was faced with great difficulties, which I now find experience has solved. Before I started, I planned my line of attack: I would be a kind gentle idol to adoring children. The children, however, immediately sensed I was "soft." They pulled faces at me, and danced behind my back, and I was at a complete loss. How on earth could I hold the interest of thirty squirming youngsters? My halo had indeed slipped: the next week I stalked in with enormous strides, banged my books on the table, and with a tyrant's scowl I enforced discipline. A little boy burst into tears, another asked me if he could go home, and many had to be excused in their anxiety. However, well before the lesson had ended, we were all laughing together, and the strict disciplinarian told them she loved them, and gave them sweets. But it is only after many months that I have reached the required medium of discipline.

Another difficulty was to dismiss any conceptions that I was a "school-ma'am." I was always in constant dread that, while the parents were chatting to me, they were associating me with females with enormous lace-up shoes. Since then I have made it a point to be as smart as I possibly can, and already two little boys have ardently proposed to me!

But the greatest problem is of teaching the weird symbols of the Hebrew language to children who have not yet mastered English. The reading is so tiresome that the stories I tell them after break are very welcome. I sit them round me in a big circle, and I am quite confident that I will hold them fascinated in a fairy-land of legends. As far as I can, I act the story as well. Believe it or not, when David kills Goliath, the board rubber goes hurtling across the room. And when I finish the story, the children draw and colour extremely interesting pictures of it; when I told them that Adam and Eve only wore a fig leaf, I found in their drawings that the fig leaf was anywhere but where it should have been!

Sometimes we do an action poem, and I have often laughed out loud to see them pretend in their own little world of fantasy. Once we all danced, and on rare occasions we sing. This, however, provides amusing but unnecessary entertainment to the children when I cannot reach the high notes.

And when the lesson is over, many of the children come and say goodbye to me – then I feel that teaching is an exhausting but rewarding and important way to learn that everyone is an interesting individual.



Avril Freedman – 5L

*Taken from the July 1964 edition of the school magazine
The photo was taken soon afterwards*

FROM THE SCHOOL ARCHIVIST

Your Editor / Archivist has some particularly encouraging news to share for this year's magazine: the school now has its own secure archive room! It is at the front of what older readers will affectionately remember as "the Underground" beneath the original main school building, partitioned off from other areas in that particular vicinity.

This enhancement of its archive facility should tell us all we need to know – if we did not already know – about how the school values its heritage. Heritage provides a shared history which connects students, staff, and alumni, creating and enhancing a sense of community and belonging – one of the school's core values. Heritage also contributes to a school's unique identity and character, fostering a shared sense of pride and tradition. And learning about past achievements, values, and traditions can (hopefully!) influence current students for the better.

Your Editor / Archivist must place on record his gratitude to the school, but not just for this considerable upgrade to the facility. He was also given complete and unfettered discretion to choose what should or should not be kept. Please rest assured that in the process, everything of actual or potential value from an archivist's perspective has been retained.

As you might expect, it was quite a task to sort through all the material which has found its way into the archives over the years. But it proved a largely enjoyable one – and at the end of the day, one shining conclusion emerged which I am happy to share: the school has a comprehensive archive collection of which it can be truly proud, going back all the 110 years to when it was founded.

Going forward, the advent of modern technology makes it likely that more archive material – particularly from the school's more recent past – will be stored in digital rather than paper format.

Your Archivist records grateful thanks to his former classmate **John Barton (1968 – 1975)** for some old school magazines and a photo from his mother **Minnie née Heather's (1930 – 1935)** time at the school,

Grateful thanks also go to Rosemary Lilley for a collection of audio recordings of various school performances by her late husband **Roger Lilley (1957 – 1964)**, and an anonymous donor of an interesting booklet about Hendon in the 1940s.

Many thanks, in addition, to everyone who has provided digitised copies of material by email over the past fourteen months.

These valuable additions to the archives are greatly appreciated ... please keep them coming!

Alan Freedman

Please send all communications to:

Alan Freedman – Honorary Archivist to Hendon School
c/o Hendon School, Golders Rise, Hendon, London NW4 2HP
freedmana@hendonschool.co.uk

It is with heartfelt regret that we report the following deaths. Our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy go to all families and friends, together with grateful thanks to all who have provided information. If you would like to add anything for inclusion in a future issue, please contact your editor.

Miles Spector (1946 – 1953) passed away on 19th October, 2023 aged 89.

Whilst blessed with many talents, both mental and physical, he will surely best be remembered as having played football as a centre-forward for Chelsea FC's first team at the age of 18½, whilst still at Hendon County.

It is, of course, the aspiration of many a schoolboy (and schoolgirl as well these days) to make the grade at that level for a top-flight football club, but that is all it remains save for a select few – and yet fewer while they are still at school! If that was not enough, Miles played really well in his appearances for Chelsea, for which he received admiring tributes in the national press (see below).

Reg Beckley (1942 – 1948) remembers Miles keeping complete control of playground games played with a very worn-out tennis ball.

Not surprisingly, Miles was a born athlete – a champion at every level – when it came to any school sporting activities. Here are two pictures of him in action, taken from a 1948 sports day collection which Reg kindly provided for the archives some time ago. He adds that Miles broke both long and high jump records for the Central Middlesex Group Sports that year.



Reg goes on to recall:

Miles and I played a lot of tennis together. He and I, together with Bob Cudmore – another Old Hendonian – went on holiday to Cornwall in 1954. Bob's mother worked for the school as Cook Supervisor for some 30 years, retiring at the end of 1961.

Although Miles came to one or two Old Hendonian FC reunions, I don't think we ever persuaded him to turn out for us ... he was far too good!

Here is a school football team from 1947/48. It is a bit of a mystery photo which came from Ron Sercombe. I have named most of the faces as they are familiar to me, and it includes Miles. They are a very mixed age group, and don't line up with team reports in school magazines. Jack Dove was the only "black" face in the school in my time.

Hendon School 1st XI 1947/48 Entwistle, Unknown, Sercombe, Morley, Streetfield, Parr, Spector, Bunting, Stone, Wardale, Dove, Wagland.
Forgot your shorts again Sercombe!!



Here is what Chelsea FC had to say about Miles in a press release:

"It is with sadness that Chelsea Football Club learns of the passing of Miles Spector, who played for the club in the early 1950s.

An 18-year-old left winger of great potential at the time, Spector was still at Hendon Grammar School when he came to Chelsea's attention.

He bunked off school to play a reserve team game. At the time, Chelsea trained just down the road, at the Welsh Harp Reservoir. On a personal level, the first half of that match did not go well – but fortunately, recently appointed Chelsea manager Ted Drake only watched after half-time, and Spector scored in the second half. The news he was subsequently picked for a first-team game was delivered by his school's headteacher who, from then on, had to give permission for each of Spector's call-ups.

The England youth international made his debut in February 1953 in a 3-2 win against Sunderland at Stamford Bridge. He retained his place for a second

replay in an FA Cup tie against West Bromwich Albion played two days later.

West Brom were top of the league while Chelsea were second from bottom – but we were holding our own in this contest, and with extra time played, forced a third replay.

At neutral-venue Highbury, Spector's direct and pacy wing-play really made an impact, and he had a direct hand in two goals and contributed to a third in a 4-0 triumph. A fifth-round match against Birmingham was equally crammed into the schedule, and a tired Chelsea were knocked out.

Spector made one appearance early in the following season, but facing competition for a place with a young Frank Blunstone and Jim Lewis, in a squad that was developing into Chelsea's first league championship winners, after playing six games for the club he opted instead for university and a career in aeronautical engineering. This was a time when there was a limit on players' wages.

Having played for Chelsea as an amateur, Spector continued as an amateur footballer, and was capped by the England Amateur international side, as well as winning the FA Amateur Cup with Hendon.

We send our deepest condolences to Miles' family and friends."

Here is how Miles' debut appearance for Chelsea was reported in the national press:

"Debut day for hero who trembled

Your name is Miles Spector. You are a handsome, well-set youth, aged 18. Son of a Hendon furrier, you are encouraged by your family to play your favourite sport, football.

You are a bright boy. You play a little tennis and badminton on the side, but you are really concerned about your studies at school.

These are pure and applied physics, mathematics and chemistry. If the results are right, you will progress from your Hendon school to either Oxford or Cambridge University, there to take a degree, after which you hope to make aircraft design your career.

All told, life is full for you, and very neatly parcelled up. You are clearly the most self-possessed youth ever to break into big football.

But for all that, there comes to you, as to every player, the awful experience of your first big match. It is for Chelsea. In the sunshine at the end of the tunnel, some 40,000 Bedouins from the deserts of Waltham Green and South Kensington, with a sprinkling of Wearside aliens, await you.

Well, you have to run down the tunnel and get it over – that moment of the dry lip and the trembling knee. In your own words, you are "completely terrified."

And young Spector found that doing it for Chelsea was worse than doing it for anyone else. In their 3-2 win over Sunderland, Chelsea lost a goal before they realized the game had started...

For ten minutes, young Spector thought he would have to quit the stationary science of physics and study the science of movement, dynamics. "I thought the pace was going to be far too much for me," he said.

For half an hour, Sunderland played as though there was indeed an entire First Division between the clubs – a fact that Chelsea refused to acknowledge to West Bromwich in the cup.

Tommy Wright took a beautiful slip pass to hit a swinger past Chelsea's goalkeeper, for goal number two. Then Chelsea, for no apparent reason, equalised within a minute. They had no pressure, no command of the game – they simply sat up and scored goals.

It seems that Chelsea can only fight back, and must give the opposition a goal, or goals, before they start to play! Inside-left Campbell made a long determined run and passed to Spector. The boy went on and thundered a low, powerful shot across the face of the goal. It beat Sunderland's goalkeeper, and there was Parsons smashing it in.

Two minutes later, Chelsea equalised. Parsons sold Aitken a dummy, and crossed the ball for Roy Bentley to crash it into the roof of the net.

Chelsea came out in the second half with their sleeves rolled up, and after 24 minutes they gained a glorious winner.

Armstrong sent over a high centre, and up soared Bentley to head the ball over the line.

Young Spector's middle name is confidence. He played with the coolness of a veteran, and he finished a second half 40-yard run with a tremendous shot which grazed the crossbar."

Miles' own first-hand account of the experience is in one of the 1953 editions of the school magazine. An electronic copy is available from your Editor on request, as is a copy of a newspaper report of Chelsea's remarkable cup victory over West Bromwich Albion: Miles thought he was far too tired to play, but Ted Drake persuaded him to change his mind. And Miles ended up the hero of the day, as noted in Chelsea FC's press release above.

Comparatively little is known about Miles' life after leaving school. He did go on to study aeronautical engineering – not at Oxbridge, but at a local college in The Burroughs then known as Hendon Tech, the campus of which has long since been part of Middlesex University. He then devoted his working life to teaching the subject rather than designing aircraft himself. All his family emigrated to South Africa in the late 1950s. Miles himself stayed in England, was married and widowed but had no children, and moved to Cornwall after taking early retirement.

Derek George Annas (1939 – 1945) passed away peacefully and with dignity in his care home on 19th March 2024, aged 96, with his family beside him. His daughter, Janet Hodgson, writes: After leaving school, Dad gained entry to Emmanuel College Cambridge to study engineering. He loved his time there, and enjoyed rowing for the college and



playing tennis. After a year at University, he was called up to join the army, and was posted to Jordan with the Royal Engineers. He had very fond memories of being in Petra – he was delighted when his granddaughter Louise followed in his footsteps and went on holiday there in 2022. She went there with her fiancé who also hailed from the Hendon area – Dad had a great affinity with him, reliving many happy memories of his younger days in the same part of London.

While he was serving in the army, Derek's father sadly passed away and so, despite his place being kept open, he had to find work in order to support his mother and sister rather than return to Cambridge to continue with his studies. Derek started working at an engineering company, W.H. Willcox, and completed his BSc Engineering degree at night school with London University. Among the many clients Derek visited on a regular basis were Buckingham Palace, The BBC and the Roux brothers. While working at Willcox, he met Betty Deverill, who became his wife in October 1952. Derek and Betty bought a house in Brentford where they had their first son, Geoffrey. When Geoffrey was about three, they moved to Surrey and had two more children, Janet and David.

Derek was a very active member of the Royal British Legion, and he and Betty went to one of the garden parties held at Buckingham Palace celebrating the work of the Legion. Derek was a keen gardener, whist and scrabble player, and jigsaw puzzle solver! He kept his brain very active with crosswords and Countdown. Betty died in 2012, and four years later Derek moved from Surrey to St. Neots in Cambridgeshire to be near to his daughter. He enjoyed being closer to family, and loved being part of many Annas family gatherings. He remained independent until a stroke in 2021, which resulted in him having to go into a care home, which was where he passed away.

Derek was a very supportive father, father-in-law, grandfather to seven grandchildren and great-grandad to eight! He lived a very long and fulfilled life, and was always grateful for the education he received at Hendon.

Leo Wildi (1946 – 1953) passed away on 4th June 2024, aged 86. He attended Wessex Gardens primary school before joining Hendon County.

David Lister (1960 – 1967) passed away last October, aged 74, after a short illness.

His sister **Reina Lister (1963 – 1970)** writes:

There are a couple of standout moments of David's time at Hendon County Grammar School: firstly his courage, aged around 14, in being a rare person to challenge Mr. E.W. Maynard Potts. The then headmaster told my brother that our parents were "wrong" in pursuing a vegetarian diet. David retorted: "On whose authority do you speak?"

Then, in 1967, David captained the team in the first ever "Trans World" Top of the Form on BBC TV. The home team succeeded in getting to the final against Australia!

David was one of the few pupils each year selected by Mr Potts for what was known as the 'back door' scheme to Cambridge University. After a successful interview and obtaining the required A-level grades, David gained admission to Caius College, where he studied history.

He stayed within the education field for the length of his career, firstly as a history teacher in various comprehensive schools in north and east London, and then as head of the governor development service at Southwark Council.

During his teaching years, he was very active in the Socialist Teachers' Alliance wing of the NUT. During his time in governor services, he wrote extensively on educational issues for the Chartist magazine, on whose editorial board he served for 30 years.

David was also an extremely committed and much valued member of Brent Labour Party for 30 years, including several years as Chair. How poignant that he missed the general election on what would have been his 75th birthday! David and his wife, Gill, were married for 37 years, and have two daughters and four grandchildren. In latter years

he was a very hands-on grandpa, allowing the youngest, at four years old, to consistently beat him at chess!

At a recent memorial, speaker after speaker paid homage to his kindness, his integrity, his diplomatic skills, his sensitivity, his lightness of touch and, not least, to his humour. I was very fortunate to have had David as my brother.

Former classmate **Rob Stebbing (1960 – 1968)** writes: David and I, along with Bernard Glicksman, Andrew Weiner (both sadly deceased), Mike Fisher, Keith Lester and James Romanos, were all in the same class at Broadfields Primary School in Edgware, and comprised the group from there that formed part of the Hendon County intake for 1960 (I don't think I've omitted anyone, but it's uncomfortably like hearing the song "Ten green bottles," as the numbers of those that survive gradually diminish).

Thanks to you kindly acting as an intermediary Alan, I was able to re-establish contact with David for the first time in some fifty years a couple of years ago, but although we exchanged a number of emails and made comments about meeting up, sadly it never progressed further.



I remember his younger sister Reina very well; I would very much like to write or email her to offer my condolences ... I seem to recall that David told me that she now lives in Leeds.

When David left Hendon County he read History at Caius College, Cambridge, and although after he graduated his initial plan was to study for a Ph.D., he eventually opted to teach History at a school on the outskirts of London. He was there for 17 years, becoming Departmental Head, before turning his back on teaching and entering Local Government.

Your Editor was delighted to be able to put Rob and Reina back in touch with each other.

Derek James Francis Peasey (1947 – 1952) passed away on 11th February 2024, aged 90, after a short illness.

His elder daughter Anne writes:

Derek was born in Leytonstone on Sunday 24th December 1933 to Jim and Dolly Peasey. His father worked on the railway, and he commented that he had had a happy childhood despite money being tight. After attending four primary schools, he won a scholarship in 1944 to Maidenhead County Boys School. He moved to Cricklewood in 1946, and in January 1947 started at Hendon County School in the third form (now Year 9). The headmaster said that he was really too young for the third form, but he had done very well in his entrance exam. Each year had three streams, Classics, Science and Technical, and since he arrived, as he described it, with a fairly creditable performance in science and a quite abysmal score in Latin, he was put into Form 3S (the science stream). From his time at Hendon County, one memorable moment he shared was being a marine (one of the two non-singing roles) in “HMS Pinafore.” Another story he often recounted was going with thirty other first year sixth pupils to Pinewood Studios, as extras in the film “The Browning Version.” Also, he fondly remembered his final trip to Austria before leaving Hendon County in summer 1952. It was one of the first after the Second World War, which involved going through the Russian zone and having a ride on the Big Wheel in the Prata, which had just featured in the film “The Third Man.”

In October 1952, thanks to a full grant, he was able to go to Exeter University, where he completed a three-year degree in Maths and Physics and a one-year PGCE course.

Derek’s first job, aged 22, was teaching maths and science at John Ruskin Grammar School for boys in Croydon. He was amused to be offered half fare on the bus on one occasion, as they thought he was under 16. His next teaching job, in 1959, took him to Willesden County School as a maths teacher, where he stayed for three years. While working as a maths teacher during the day, he enrolled at Birkbeck College and completed a second degree in maths. Here he met Joan, who was also a student at Birkbeck. They were married in 1961, and after briefly living in West Ealing, moved to Harlow,

where Derek started work at the newly-opened Burnt Mill School as head of maths.

He had only been teaching in Harlow for four years when he was offered a position at Balls Park teacher training college in Hertford as a senior lecturer in mathematics. Later he took over as head of department. Recent comments from former colleagues make it clear that he was a good teacher and had a calm approach to even the most disruptive pupils. One colleague mentioned she had learnt a great deal from him when she first started working. Another colleague said that he had learnt a lot from him about how to work with students.

Following the merger of Balls Park College with Wall Hall teacher training college, Derek took over as head of mathematics, where he stayed for ten years before taking early retirement in 1987.



He did not retire to take things easy, but to continue and expand his influence on mathematics education. He co-ordinated some courses across the country for mathematics advisors and lecturers, sponsored by the Micro Electronics Support Unit, on the use of microcomputers and calculators in mathematics education. He also did some A-level maths tutoring. He was involved in local politics, was a governor for local primary and secondary schools, a member of the Hertfordshire Education Committee, and a member of school admissions appeals panels.

Derek and Joan were married for over 60 years and had two daughters: Anne was born in 1965, and Sarah in 1967. Both went to university and completed postgraduate studies. Anne is now an epidemiologist, who works and lectures at UCL in London, and Sarah is

an EAL teacher in Northamptonshire. Throughout his teens, Derek was active in the Scouts, making many lasting friendships. Despite the passing years, he remained in contact with several scouting friends, and they continued to have regular reunions. With his retirement, in his own words, he said that his interests switched to family history, his children and grandchildren, Gabriella and Christopher. Derek and Joan loved to visit National Trust and English Heritage properties and local RHS gardens. He enjoyed watching his grandchildren grow up, and was very proud of their achievements in university and now as they start their careers.

Derek will be fondly remembered by family and friends, and all who were lucky enough to have met him during his life. If you knew Derek, then please ask your Editor for my email address, as we would love to hear new stories from his time at Hendon County.

Anne has kindly provided this informal class photo of 5S below. Derek is in the back row, second from the right, "smiling as always!" as she put it.



Peter Solley (1960 – 1966) – musician, producer, and pop and rock instrumentalist – passed away aged 75 on 16th November 2023, in Vermont, USA.

Former schoolmate **Vivien Goldsmith (1965 – 1967)** writes:

School wasn't really what made Peter Solley tick - but he stuck it out long enough to reach the sixth form at Hendon County in 1965.

He was not on for the long slog to A-levels – he left before taking them, and ended up on stage skipping the light fandango with Procol Harum – and so much more. He grew up in a highly political, intellectual and musical family. His father, Leslie Solley, was a left-wing Labour MP who was expelled from the Labour Party in 1949, after he refused to follow the party line and support NATO. He favoured being part of a united Europe and working through the United Nations.

Leslie Solley was also a physicist, a barrister, and had written popular songs in the 1920s and 1930s as well as musicals and symphonic works. Peter's mother, Josie Fisher, who worked for the Communist newspaper, *The*

Daily Worker, opened the first vegetarian bistro in London, *Raw Deal*, in York Street, Marylebone. The household was alive with music and politics, with frequent visits from black-listed American musicians who had fled the McCarthy purges and black African revolutionaries.

Peter was first pushed to play the violin, which was not a success, and he was then given piano lessons. But his teacher said he had no talent, probably because he refused to practise the basics. So he taught himself to play the piano; he also played the trumpet, violin and clarinet, and wrote music from a very young age.

"Truthfully, I never had a thought that I would not be doing music for the rest of my life. I knew what I was from the age of ten, a musician." Peter wrote.

At 13, he won a scholarship to spend one day a week at Trinity College of Music after playing Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, and Bach on the violin, at his audition.

His older brother, Stephen Solley KC, who was also a Hendonian, was into jazz, and the brothers played together in a school jazz band. Peter also played lead trumpet in the first National Jazz Youth Orchestra.

Fellow Hendonian **Ralph Koorlander (1961 – 1968)** also used to go along to the Sunday afternoon rehearsals at The Marquee Club in Wardour Street. "Both of us were blown away by contributing to the lush big-band arrangements of Dizzy Gillespie's *A Night in Tunisia* and Duke Ellington's *Satin Doll*. I remember Pete blowing a mean trumpet over in the brass section.

Pete was a formidable multi-instrumentalist," says Ralph. "I recall sitting on the stage of the school hall belting out *Green Onions* while Pete sat up in the organ loft miles away, grappling with the infernal delay of the school's less-than-mighty Wurlitzer."

Peter's love of rock and roll was sparked by seeing the Yardbirds, with Eric Clapton. Many years later he played with Clapton. One of his first jobs as a teenage musician was facing huge screaming crowds in Franco's Spain as the organist with Los Bravos, which had a pan-European hit with *Black is Black*. They sometimes played gigs in bullrings after the blood was cleared away from the daytime bullfight. The famous bullfighter El Cordobes once dedicated a kill to Peter and presented him with a severed bull's ear.

In his early twenties, Peter played with Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds for about a year; then he moved



over to The Crazy World of Arthur Brown with his mammoth hit *Fire*, before touring the US alongside Cream and The Rolling Stones. He was on the 1969 Stones tour of the USA along with B.B. King, and Ike and Tina Turner. His first silver disc came from Fox, the band fronted by Australian singer Noosha Fox and their hit single in Britain and around Europe *Only You Can*. When he moved across to play the Hammond organ with Procol Harum, *A Whiter Shade of Pale* had already been recorded, but it was Peter who played it live on stage. If you follow this link – [Procol Harum - Live at BBC TV 1977](#) – or do an equivalent search on YouTube, you can see Peter playing live at the Golders Green Hippodrome for a BBC recording, with Peter playing keyboards throughout, but switching to the fiddle after 25 minutes for the finale.

Procol Harum recorded a new album in Miami, USA, and Peter got more involved with American musicians. He hung out with Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, later moving on to record production.

Peter produced four albums for the Detroit band, The Romantics. Their number *What I Like about You* was a modest hit at first, but had staying power and became one of the all-time most played singles on radio and TV. It was used in commercials and at American National Football games. “Each time I watched the Miami Dolphins’ cheerleaders bounce onto the field to my track,” Peter once wrote, “I was earning a few extra bucks”.

Over the years he also produced several albums for Motorhead, and a string of successful advertising jingles. His client list included BMW, Coca Cola, and Kellogg’s Cornflakes. He was so busy that he had a permanent booking on studios for two days a week, with a rhythm section booked for each day, plus strings ready to go at a moment’s notice. He would get the commercial’s voice copy and lyrics from the ad agency, write the score in the evening, and send it out to the copyist for a 7.00 a.m. studio call the next morning in London.

In later years, Peter moved from Florida to Vermont USA, where he made his own ice-cream for the Newfane Café which he ran with his third wife, Susan Tondreau. It was so successful that he started making gelato commercially. And he played a lot of tennis. Peter, who had oral cancer, died aged 75 in Brattleboro, Vermont, with help from Vermont Act 39. This allows patients with a terminal diagnosis to self-administer medical aid in dying (MAID). At the end, he was with his wife Susan and his daughter Hannah from Dublin, Ireland, whose mother, Ann Crockford, was Peter’s first wife, and died in 1975. Hannah gave Peter his two grandchildren.

Stephen Dresner (1949 – 1956 and staff, 1959 – 1988) passed away in August 2022, aged 84. He was a Physics teacher during your Editor’s time at the school, although he never taught your Editor personally.

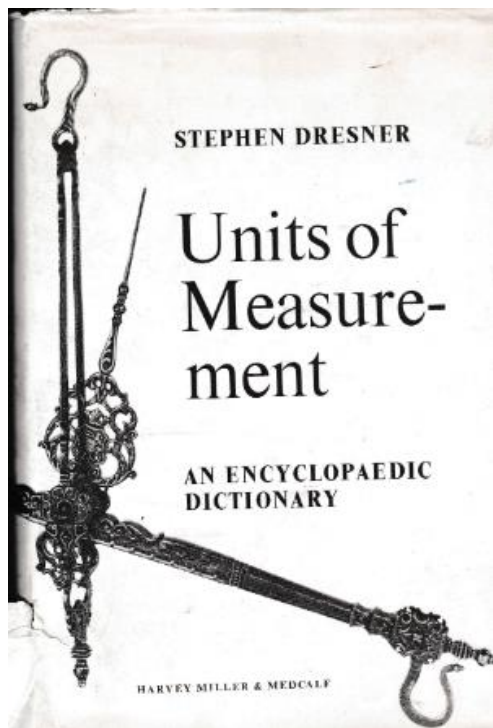
Stephen’s sister **Evelyn Kennedy née Dresner (1956 – 1963)** writes:

Stephen and his wife Judith lived in Finchley all their marriage until just before Covid, when they moved to Manchester on their son Tristan’s insistence so that they (Tristan, daughter-in-law and family) could see them often and keep an eye on them. There they delighted in often seeing their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, with whom Stephen loved to play and read books. A sadness was that their daughter Tanya lived in New York where she had married, so they were rarely able to meet up.



We were not a family who took photographs often. The best I can do from more or less the period when Stephen taught at Hendon is Stephen’s wedding photo, taken on 1st January, 1967. He married Judith Baskin who at that time and afterwards taught at Menorah Primary School in Golders Green, so you may have readers who remember her from there. The bridesmaid in the photo is me – at that time, of course, also a Dresner! Stephen had his own book published in 1971 – a photo of the front cover is on the next page. He loved to research things, and continued to do so. I believe one of his topics for research was the numbers 1 to 10 in all languages – how they were derived etc. etc. He also travelled a lot, mainly alone as Judith didn’t really enjoy travel, and he did plenty of research of things to see and visit wherever he was going. I believe it was one of the

Canadian Customs officials who got a bit suspicious finding Stephen with a lot of detailed maps of the city and buildings he might visit! He went to hear opera when he could, and had a huge collection of classical CDs which both he and Judith enjoyed listening to in the evenings. His degree had been in Astronomy – and, though he didn't actively pursue it, he had a huge collection of astronomical books, mainly on the planets, sun, and moon I think, and continued to take an astronomical journal regularly all his life.



Stephen remained friendly with Gertie Stranz – Tristan found a letter from her to Stephen amongst his papers. He was also particularly friendly with Paddy Murphy (maths teacher), I think especially as they shared a love of Wagner's music – which might also have influenced the choice of the name Tristan for his son!

One long-forgotten snippet is that on January 14th 1960, Stephen was featured in a double-page spread in the *Daily Mirror* along with seven other 'young sparks'. This came about because the mother of one of the friends was the journalist Marge Proops, and the *Mirror* wanted a feature on how you could still party after the Christmas bills though, as much of the food mentioned was not kosher, most of them (certainly Stephen included) would not have actually eaten it! It reads "The host and chef-in-chief at this party was twenty-one year old physics teacher Stephen Dresner".

Three of your Editor's old classmates have sent in the following tributes.

Dr Philip Corbin (1968 – 1975) writes:

Mr. Stephen Dresner was my Physics Teacher at Hendon School during the early 1970s, up to A-level. One of my favourite teachers, he caused me to fall in love with the subject to this day. Many of us in my Physics class, including myself, gained an 'A' for our A-level exam results in Physics as a result of his brilliant style of teaching. Under his tutelage, I fell in love with the subject of electromagnetism, and this was the reason I chose electrical engineering as a career. I went on from Hendon to gain a BSc degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Southampton (1975-1978) and later on, MSc and PhD degrees in Electrical Engineering from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST 1981-1984).

My favourite memory from my Dresner tuition days was when he started a Physics class one day by asking: "If, when we look in a mirror, we see things reversed from right to left, why don't we see things reversed from top to bottom?" This sparked off much heated and animated debate. With hindsight, the point of the question was of course not to actually get an answer out of us, but to get us to think about, not just recite, the laws of reflection of light. I was much saddened to learn that he passed away last year. May he rest in peace.

David Ellis (1968 – 1975) writes:

So sorry to hear that Mr. Dresner passed away. I recall his amazing ability year-in, year-out to complete the timetabling for all the classes; his rather professorial teaching style/manner, and that I spoke with him years after when I visited Immanuel College School with my eldest son – perhaps 20 years after leaving Hendon School, and he was the Head of the Science Department there – he rather amusingly shared a few insights on the differences in students between the two schools, and was very friendly and relaxed.

I know we all enjoyed over the years fiddling with all the pendulums; weighings and batteries/rheostats etc. and our physics then was quite removed from the space age; quantum and relativity advances that had been taking place in the twentieth century, but the course up to A-level was very broad and interesting, almost from a historical perspective rather than a contemporary view.

Charles Weinstein (1968 – 1975) adds:

I found the following [link](#) online where Stephen Dresner's name is mentioned (only one line in a table) regarding his attendance at a summer school at Herstmonceux in 1958, referring to him coming from UCL. Somewhat of an aside, if you scroll down the many photos in the article to 1961, there is one including another Stephen – Hawking – when he attended in 1961. And here is what the school's 75th anniversary brochure had to say about Stephen:

His great intelligence and incisive mind were greatly appreciated by his A-level physics students, and by his colleagues, for his conversation ranged widely from astronomy to music, opera, books, philosophy and other topics. For years, he was the architect of the complicated

timetable, as well as a co-author and actor in staff revue and staff melodrama. In later years, he was the Director of Studies.

William (Bill) Clarke (1948 – 1952) – seventh child in a family of seven boys and two girls – died peacefully in Gosford Hospital, Central Coast, NSW Australia, on April 27th 2023, aged 85.

Caroline Hutchins, a family member, writes:

Bill attended Hendon County for three years, and then St. Albans Grammar when his family moved to Harpenden. The very interesting life of the Clarke family was comprehensively covered in the excellent obituary for Carol Briscoe née Clarke, written by her daughter Joanna Briscoe and published in the 2015 edition of the *Old Hendonian*.

Bill married in 1960 and had two daughters, Lindsey (deceased) and Rachael. Both his daughters became nurses – Lindsey in management and Rachael in palliative care. He also had five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

He studied architecture part-time, and when he qualified in 1979 he started a very successful Architect's practice with John Whalen – Clarke & Whalen in Harpenden. He played a lot of sport – rugby, cricket, squash and golf. He was Captain of the Dolphins cricket team and Captain of Harpenden Golf Club, achieving a handicap of 8.

When we moved to Australia in 2001, he became involved in the local rugby club Warnervale, where three of his grandsons played. He attended matches every Saturday, and could be seen walking round the pitch, encouraging the home side. He was very much involved in the development of junior rugby, and served as Secretary to the club

for three years. On hearing of his death, the Club recognised his great contribution to the game of rugby with a minute's silence.

Bill developed dementia in 2012, and was in a nursing home from 2021 until he died. He still recognised his wife and daughter, and was fortunate to be in a very good facility where he was well cared for and happy.

He led a full and busy life – we miss him.

Claudine Ruby, née Fear (1961 – 1968), passed away in June 2022.

Her husband Michael writes:

After leaving school, Claudine attended Surrey University where she obtained a degree in human biology, developing a particular interest in human genetics.

She began her scientific career in the NHS as a research assistant at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in 1972, a

leading clinical genetics centre in South-East England, progressing to an appointment as a scientific officer in diagnostic genetics. She was a skilful chromosome analyst, and in 1998 she was promoted to Principal Clinical Scientist, as leader of the pre-natal section. She was also a named contributor to many published scientific papers in her field of expertise. During her long service at Guy's, she witnessed and took part in many changes and advances in laboratory practices and techniques. She also worked with and tutored many overseas scientists who visited Guy's from all over the world, some becoming life-long friends. She was awarded a Long Service Gold Badge in December 2008, and she retired the following year. She continued to pursue her long-standing artistic interests: painting, drawing and making textile art, pottery and sculpture. She also continued to knit and crochet extensively. She maintained her allotment throughout her career and in retirement, becoming Chair of the Finchley Horticultural Society for some six years. She married in 1987, and remained much involved in family life.

Dr Hans Steiner (1947 – 1954) passed away on 17th July 2023, aged 88.

What follows is taken from the 2021 edition of the *Old Hendonian* and the British Medical Journal.

Born in Vienna in 1934 to a long-established Jewish family, his life was turned on its head when Germany annexed Austria and brought in anti-Semitic laws. Hans and his family fled to Belgium, where he was hidden and educated in a convent under a false name. Both his parents sadly perished in Auschwitz.

Hans and his younger brother survived the war. In early 1947, they were taken in by an uncle and aunt who lived in Golders Green, and Hans was admitted to Hendon County soon afterwards.

Despite having no understanding of English, he made remarkable progress in that respect and soon settled in. A testimonial from his headmaster read: "His good work in science will enable him to become that most valuable type of man who sees the sciences against a background of the humanities."

He received a place to study medicine in Bristol. He decided on a career in paediatrics and as part of his training spent a year in Ibadan, Nigeria. Hans was a great storyteller, and one of his favourites was to recall being involved in a national census soon after arriving in Nigeria. He completed the census form, which had a list of possible religions — but did not include Jewish. On pointing this out he was asked if he had been circumcised, to which he replied yes. "OK, we will put you down as Muslim."

He eventually found his way to Newcastle, where Donald Court had just completed a national review of the care of children, Fit for the Future. One of the main recommendations was to develop community paediatrics, and Hans was appointed to a development post working with general practice and the local authority. Community paediatrics is now a well



established paediatric subspecialty. He also developed an interest in the fledgling specialty of the newborn, undertaking a follow-up study of the development of babies who had had a cardiac arrest during the perinatal period. His conclusion was that attempts at resuscitation beyond 25 minutes were not justified. His paper published in 1975 was influential in defining standards of care.

He ran the mother and baby unit at the Fleming Children's Hospital, where complex social and child protection matters could be investigated and managed. Hans married Jenny, a neonatal nurse, in 1966, and they had four children. In retirement they moved to Preston in Lancashire, but within a few weeks Jenny developed pancreatic cancer, from

which she died seven months later.

Hans had much time on his hands and pursued a variety of interests, including learning

Yiddish, photography, and writing a biography of James Spence. At his children's insistence, he

began to talk for the first time about his early years and wrote his book, *A Memoir of Survival and Eventual Happiness and Fulfilment in Life*. Published in 2020, the book is an absorbing account of the first thirty years of his life, and a copy can be found in the school library. A whole chapter is devoted to his school days, complete with pictures and a mention of his return for a reunion held in 1995.

Hans made special mention of two very good friends he made during his time at the school and who remained lifelong friends: **Dr Gerald Hass MD (1946 – 1953)** who now lives in Massachusetts, and **Stanley Rosenthal (1946 – 1951)**, whose father was the Beadle of the Hendon Synagogue for many years.

Both are regular subscribers to the *Old Hendonian*.

Hans became reconciled to his Austrian nationality and Jewish heritage, describing himself as an atheist Jew, very happily married to a Christian.

Hans was successful in finding great happiness and fulfilment in his professional and family life despite his early traumas. Always cheerful and a great support to children and their families as well as staff, Hans was a good and caring doctor, and constantly had a twinkle in his eye.

For his retirement party, he asked to be taken to the local greyhound racing track, and the invitation read, "Hans is going to the dogs. Why not join him?"

Hans leaves four children.



Professor John Greenspan B.D.S., Ph.D

(1952 – 1956), who passed away on 31st March 2023, aged 85, was known as Joseph Greenspan while at the school. He was a distinguished professor emeritus of oral pathology at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry, and a past president of

the American Association for Dental Research (now the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research) and International Association for Dental Research.

The website of the American Dental Association (ADA) records that John's work on the relationship between oral health and HIV/AIDS helped establish the field of oral HIV/AIDS research. He and his wife, Deborah

Greenspan, B.D.S., D.Sc., a past recipient of the ADA's Norton M. Ross Award for Excellence in Clinical

Research, identified the oral condition hairy leukoplakia — typically found in people who are immunocompromised, especially those with HIV/AIDS — and its connection to the Epstein-Barr virus.

John is survived by his wife, son Nick, daughter Louise, and four grandchildren.

In an ADA News story published in 2012, Dr. Greenspan said he was surprised to learn he was the winner of that year's Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Dental Research, and happy for HIV/AIDS research to be recognized.

"I must say that I am delighted, actually, and impressed that HIV science, the oral and dental aspects, oral pathology and oral medicine are being recognized," Dr. Greenspan told the ADA News at the time. "What a wonderful way to encourage young and new investigators and clinicians to work in these fields, not to mention showing the public the importance of those areas of our profession and our science."



Joan Wing, née Daley – (1943 – 1948) – died last year in her nineties.

Her daughter, Valerie Surguy, writes:

My mother, Joan, was born in Harlesden in October 1930. Her early school years were spent at Harrow Weald Mixed Infant and Junior School, as well as at two different schools in Somerset to where she had been evacuated. On returning to the Harrow area, she sat the 11 plus in 1941 and, in her own words, 'failed miserably'. This meant that her education continued at Belmont Senior Girls' School. However, she was re-entered for the 11 plus the following year, having had months of extra work at home in preparation, (it helped that her aunt was a teacher!) and this time she passed. She was accepted at Hendon County Grammar School. Again, in her own words, her school days 'were not the happiest days' of her life, probably in part due to the fact that her eyesight was very poor and could not be completely corrected by glasses. However, she passed her matriculation examination and, after much difficulty, (again due to the perceived handicap of poor eyesight) began her teacher training at Wall Hall Training College, Aldenham.

Mum spent most of her working life teaching, initially in Harrow and subsequently in Hillingdon. She was widowed early on, and juggled being a single parent with her full-time teaching career. She took early retirement in 1985 (following surgery for a detached retina) and enjoyed a long and relatively healthy retirement, volunteering with children and being active with the local church, to name but a few activities, as well as keeping in touch with various friends including some from her time at Hendon County School. She often remarked how unbelievable it was that her retirement was longer than her working life!

In the 2006 edition of the *Old Hendonian*, Joan shared some other memories from her time at Hendon County. In 1947, thanks to the generosity of two maiden aunts, she was able to go on a school trip to Switzerland, from where she wrote home on a daily basis. She recalled Tuesday evening trips to the Hippodrome Theatre in Golders Green. Finally, she recalled spending many hours in the air-raid shelters towards the end of the war, when London was under attack from the doodlebugs and V2 rockets, and when the school gym and North playground were “out of bounds” because they were being used by the Civil Defence as their local headquarters.

Roger Lilley (1957 – 1964) passed away in August last year, aged 77.

His widow, Rosemary, writes:

Roger sang in the school choir, and this gave him the opportunity to travel outside the school grounds to BBC recording studios, including Abbey Road. The choir had the opportunity to take part in BBC schools programmes, and also in commercials. There were also trips with the choir to Berlin – those were the days before the erection of the Berlin Wall. It was the time of Headmaster E.W. Maynard Potts and music teacher Charles Western. Other names he mentioned were Gertrude Stranz and Miss Riddiford who both sang in the choir, and whose German-speaking ability was invaluable on the trips to Berlin. He also sang in the choir at St. Mary’s Hendon.

While he was at school, Roger developed an interest in sound recording which was to stay with him all his life. He never threw anything away, and many early recordings and equipment still exist in the family home. On leaving school, Roger studied Mechanical and Electrical engineering at the Royal Naval College in Greenwich. Here too he sang in the choir, and was involved in various musical productions, including Gilbert and Sullivan.

From Greenwich he went straight into the Civil Service, where he worked for the old Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, later the Property Services Agency (PSA). He looked after security in many ministers’ homes, and also in public buildings, but the times he enjoyed most were those spent at No. 10

Downing Street. Later PSA moved to Croydon, and he became involved with projects jointly run with the RAF. These included the upgrade of the Fylingdales Early Warning Station in North Yorkshire – the replacement of the well-known “Golf Balls” with a much less interesting looking more modern building.

Following the privatisation of PSA, Roger went to work for British Rail just before its own privatisation. His favourite project with the railway was the building of Ashford International Station during the exciting period of the construction of the Channel Tunnel.

Roger was one of the first to buy a home computer, and his love of IT stayed with him all his life. He could also turn his hand to any practical tasks in the house, and took on highly complicated DIY projects, preferring never to call on outside help. He was never a particularly outdoors sort of person, but did enjoy constructing walls and pathways, sheds and greenhouses in the garden. The family acquired a share of a house in France, and he transferred his skills down there, embracing the challenge of French building regulations with enthusiasm.

Sadly Roger became ill with Hodgkins Lymphoma in 2021, and this relapsed in 2023. He leaves a wife, a son and a multitude of tools, computers, and recording equipment ancient and modern!

Last but not least, and with a heavy heart ... it is now your Editor’s unhappy misfortune to undertake the most difficult and painful task he has encountered since he started compiling the *Old Hendonian* ... to author an obituary on his own beloved and remarkable sister. For these purposes, he will take the unusual liberty of writing in the first person.

Avril Newman, née Freedman (1959 – 1966) passed away peacefully at home on 7th May 2024, aged 76, after a relatively short illness.

Born on 26th April, 1948, she was the second of three children – I was the youngest, born nine years later. Our older sister Linda also survives her.

Avril spent her early years growing up in West Hendon.



She went to Algernon Road primary school, and for many years lived in the same block of flats as Miles Spector and his family. This picture of Avril, helping me ride a tricycle, was taken there. Creative and articulate in thought and words from a young age, she had

poems published in the *Jewish Chronicle*. She passed her 11 plus exams to get into HCGS, where she thrived, took part in school plays, and had articles published in the school magazine – I have chosen one for the “From the Archives” section on page 27, in which, with a delightful blend of humour and insight, she described

her early experience of teaching children, which was to shape her entire working career. Her best friend at school was **Margaret Kent, née Fabian (1959 – 1966)**.

I am writing these words seated at the same bureau in our family home where Avril spent many long hours doing her homework after coming home from school. It is still equipped with well-thumbed English and French dictionaries which she used. As a boy, I felt rather daunted watching her, because it all looked like very dull, hard work to me – they didn't set much homework at Bell Lane School in those days!

After taking her A-levels in English Literature, History and French – Miss Kay was her form mistress in the Lower Sixth and Mrs Oxbury in the Upper Sixth – Avril rounded off her time at Hendon County by playing the lead role of Lady Bracknell in that year's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Only 17 years old and still at school when our dear father was taken from us far too soon, Avril – together with Linda of course – played a pivotal role in supporting our dear mother, as well as me, through the incredibly challenging times which followed.

I learned so much about life and its deeper meaning from Avril. She taught me from an early age, gently and with sensitivity, how to think and observe critically, and to consider the wider consequences of what I said and did. We had fun playing draughts and lots of different card games ... and we even had the odd game of chess! She had a lot of valuable things to tell me about what to expect from Hendon County when my time came to go there.

After leaving school, Avril went on a three-year teacher training course at Goldsmiths College in south London. She then spent her entire working life teaching in primary schools. Her first post was in Preston Park, near Wembley, but then she taught exclusively in the East End of London.



It was Avril who first encouraged me to start coaching chess at her school in Limehouse, where she served as head teacher for nearly 30 years until the day she died.

And what an inspirational head teacher she was, making that school a veritable oasis in that

deprived area of London, and opening up vistas of opportunity for the children who were lucky enough to pass through its doors, literally transforming hundreds if not thousands of young lives for the better in the process. A visit to her school, whether for chess or any other reason, never failed to be anything other than an uplifting experience – the atmosphere was bright and vibrant, the children happy and well-mannered. In common with the very best of teachers and leaders, Avril had the uncanny knack of making you feel like you were the only person who mattered, regardless of how busy she happened to be, or the number of competing simultaneous demands on her time.

In fact I was at her school, saying my goodbyes, at the very time that she passed away! They sent me on my way with cards, flowers, and good wishes.

She is pictured left, entering fully into the spirit of World Book Day one year, by dressing up as a fairy godmother.

She also found the time to train and sit as a respected magistrate on the City of London Circuit for a number of years.

Avril met Warren, the love of her life, at a Jewish young

singles club in the early 1970s, where she made a number of other lifelong friends. Their romance blossomed, and it was no surprise when they announced their



engagement and got married in 1973. They went on to spend 51 blissfully happy years together – first in Ilford and then for over 40 years in Greenwich – and Warren was with her until the very end. Unfortunately, Warren's own health deteriorated in recent years – but I know from first-hand experience what a tower of strength and support Avril was throughout, never displaying anything but a positive attitude and a smiling face.

Like me before I took over as editor of *The Old Hendonian*, Avril was a keen reader of the magazine ... but – despite my best endeavours in recent years! – she never got round to actually contributing an article for publication.

Avril is survived by Warren, and their children David and Debbie, who are both following in her footsteps as respected educators.



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